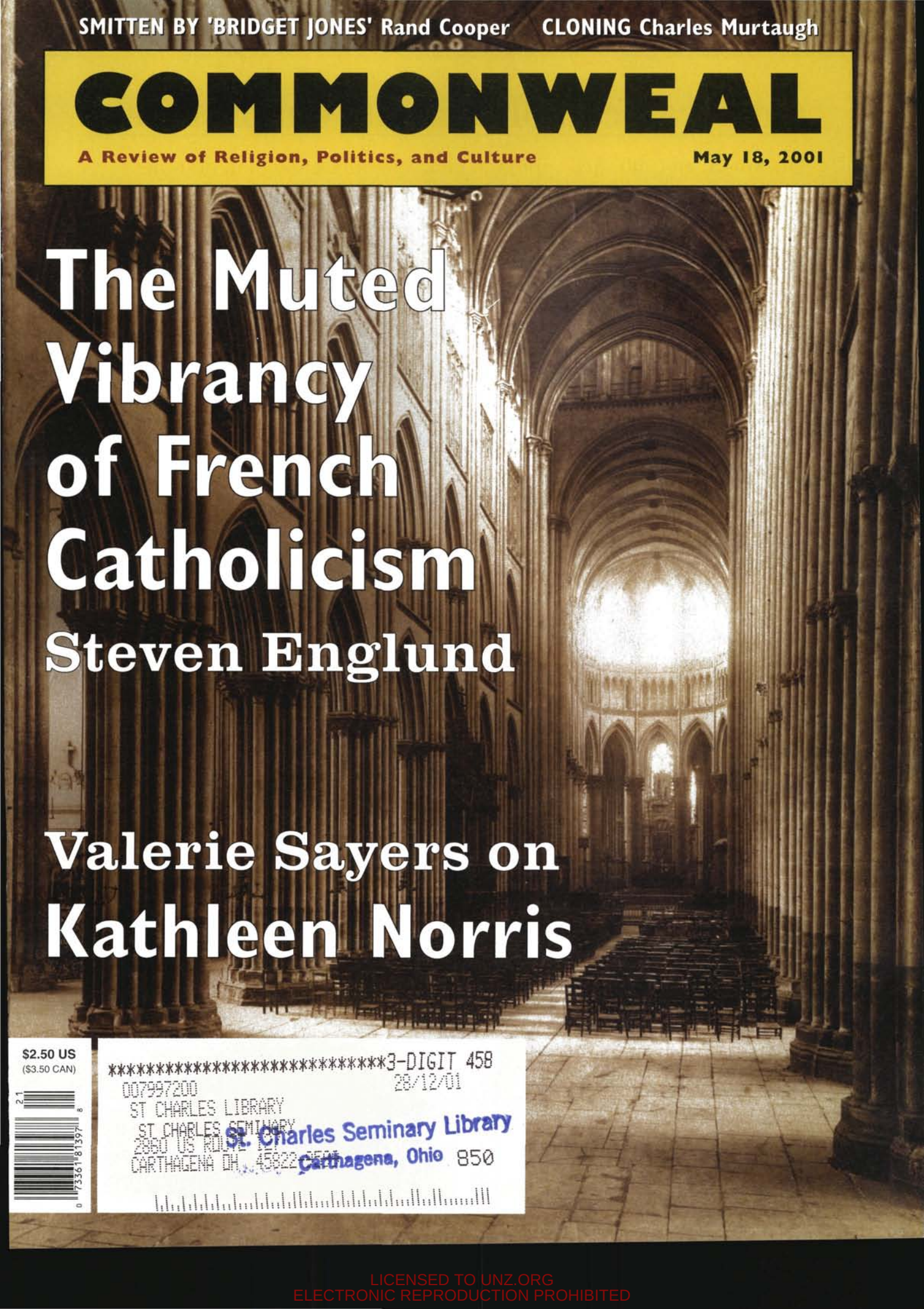
SMITTEN BY 'BRIDGET JONES' Rand Cooper CLONING Charles Murtaugh

COMMONWEAL

A Review of Religion, Politics, and Culture

May 18, 2001



The Muted Vibrancy of French Catholicism

Steven Englund

Valerie Sayers on Kathleen Norris

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american catholics in the public square

Do American Catholics approach civic life differently than do other Americans? Can a Catholic presence in the public square contribute something distinctive to the nation's political and cultural debates? How has American culture affected Catholic political and social thought? Are younger Catholics being drawn to new expressions of public Catholicism — or to none at all?

American Catholics in the Public Square is a three-year research project aimed at

- identifying distinctive elements in a Catholic approach to civic life;
- exploring the strengths and weaknesses of this tradition in the American context;
- examining how the tradition is being currently expressed and transmitted;
- analyzing the obstacles, within the culture or the church, that impede a more robust Catholic presence in the public square.

American Catholics in the Public Square is co-sponsored by the Commonweal Foundation in New York City and the Faith & Reason Institute in Washington, D.C. It is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Participants in the project's meetings have included: Scott Appleby, Benedict Ashley, Paul Baumann, Peter Berkowitz, Joseph Bottum, John Carr, Peter Casarella, John A. Coleman, Charles E. Curran, James Davidson, Michelle Dillon, Augustine Di Noia, E.J. Dionne, Jean Bethke Elshtain, James Fisher, Bryan Froehle, William Galston, Dana Gioia, J. Bryan Hehir, Russell Hittinger, John Langan, David Leege, Jane Mansbridge, Mark Massa, John McGreevy, Mary McGrory, Ralph McInerny, Wilson Carey McWilliams, Philip Murnion, Michael Novak, Kate O'Beirne, David O'Brien, Michael Perry, Stephen Pope, Jean Porter, Thomas Reese, Robert Royal, Russell Shaw, Margaret O'Brien Steinfels, Peter Steinfels, Leslie Tentler, Robert Wilken, John Wilkins, Gregory Wolfe.

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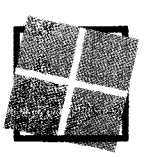

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COMMONWEAL

May 18, 2001 / Volume CXXVIII, Number 10

UPFRONT

Correspondence *Mandate, Middle East & more* 4

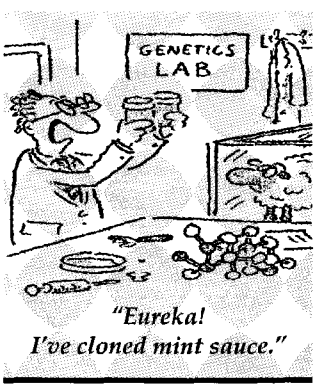
Editorials *A just war?* 5
Haight on trial 6

COLUMNISTS

Caste away
Jo McGowan
Paddling against the current in India 7

Bob Kerrey's war
William Pfaff 8

SHORT TAKE



Shun cloning
Charles Murtaugh 9

Academic sweatshops
Clayton Sinyai
Adjuncts, unite! 10

ARTICLES

L'ÉGLISE DE FRANCE
Steven Englund
Being Catholic in the Gallic way 12

SILENT DISSENTER
Bernard Doering
Why didn't Jacques Maritain speak up? 17

POETRY

Rondel of Charles D'Orleans, # 1
Len Krisak 20

VERDICTS

SCREEN

Bridget Jones's Diary
The Widow of Saint-Pierre
Rand Richards Cooper
Love in two cold climates 21

"And they say the French know how to live. Ha!"

MUSIC

Anon was a woman
Benjamin Ivry 23

BOOKS

The Virgin of Bennington
by Kathleen Norris
Valerie Sayers 24

Public Vows
by Nancy Cott
Barbara Dafoe Whitehead 25

Cold War Civil Rights
by Mary L. Dudziak
John Summers 27

THE LAST WORD

Memorial Day, Dorset, Vermont
Susanne Washburn 31

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To the Editors

Sparks of joy

Time and again it is good to find an article like Valerie Sayers's "Being a Writer, Being Catholic" (May 4) in your journal. As well she must, she features novels. But before Pentecost this year I rush to mention a 1950s short story, Muriel Spark's "Come Along, Marjorie" in her *Go-Away Bird and Other Stories*. In it Spark's comic ironies glitter. Midway they fairly burst with Christian joy and awe amid quotidian living that does not go away. Rereading never fails to bring a tear to my eye. Others might not easily refrain from their own tears of Christian joy.

PHILIP C. FISCHER, S.J.
Saint Louis, Mo.

Jesuits & justice

In his review of *Jesuit Education 21* ["How to Be Loyal to Loyola," April 20] Dennis O'Brien makes cogent points regarding the departure that was taken at the Jesuit General Council 32 of the Society of Jesus from the Christ-centered focus of Ignatius Loyola. Under the single-minded direction of Pedro Arrupe, S.J., father general of the Jesuits at the time, social justice became the defining characteristic of the Jesuit order in general and of Jesuit pedagogy in particular.

Social justice is intrinsic to the Gospels and a component of Catholic teaching, but it is derivative of both and should be taught in that context. The Arrupean model is hardly "loyal to Loyola" but is clearly a departure from the Ignatian *ratio studiorum* as a principle of Jesuit education.

The characterization of past Jesuit education as serving "ghetto Catholics" and teaching "*Baltimore Catechism* Plus" is an affront to the legions of Jesuits who have served Christ and his church for five hundred years. Perhaps this post-Arrupe attitude is why the membership in the Society of Jesus is a third smaller than it was thirty years ago.

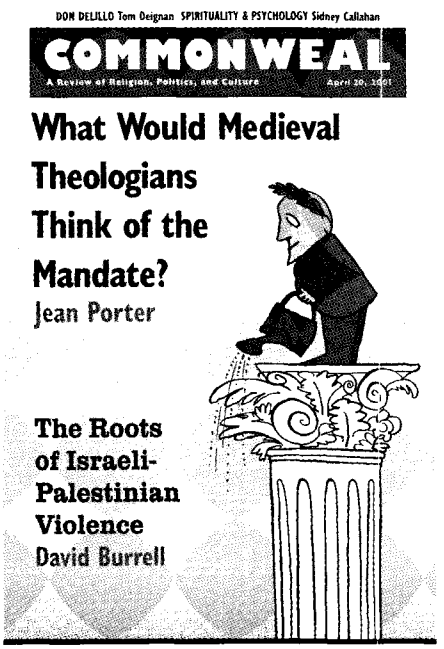
WILLIAM DORNBURGH
Cooperstown, N.Y.

Father S. lives

You can tell Peter Feuerherd ["The Territorial Imperative," April 20] that his Father S. (for Schmidlin) is alive and well and now pastor of Saint Matthew Church in Indianapolis. He was indeed pastor of Saint Joan of Arc in Indianapolis twenty years ago when the neighboring parish, Saint Thomas Aquinas, was "a hip Catholic alternative," as Feuerhard describes it.

I sent the column to Schmidlin and he called to say that he enjoyed it--especially the sentence, "He was a prophetic priest making a point." Feuerherd got his point right, he said. Father S. didn't object, but I would, to Feuerherd's description of Schmidlin as "a perpetually disgruntled pastor" or as "a jealous grumpy old pastor." He would have been all of fifty years old twenty years ago and, although Feuerherd might have thought fifty was old then, I'm sure he doesn't today.

JOHN F. FINK
Indianapolis, Ind.


DON DELILLO Tom Deignan SPIRITUALITY & PSYCHOLOGY Sidney Callahan
COMMONWEAL
A Review of Religion, Politics, and Culture
April 20, 2001
What Would Medieval Theologians Think of the Mandate?
Jean Porter
The Roots of Israeli-Palestinian Violence
David Burrell

Israeli crimes

Thank you for David Burrell's commentary ["Warring Stories," April 20] on the Israeli settlers and the Palestinians. Northern Ireland came to mind, where hundreds of innocent people lost their lives to the bullets and batons of the security forces, as well as to those of hardline loyalists who were, we were told time and time again by the news media, "simply" responding to attack by rioting civilians. To my mind, there are no morally acceptable excuses for bombs set in civilian settings with total disregard for life. These kinds of outrages are deplorable and the perpetrators should be brought to justice. However, there has been a clear trend in reports and commentaries on the Israeli-Palestinian "situation," to play up the killing of one or two Jewish settlers, and totally whitewash the slaying of Palestinian children such as the nine-year-old helping his father paint their new home, or Aida Fteiha, shot dead on her way home from shopping. Equally inexcusable is the action of the bombers.

We should pray for peace in the Holy Land and for Palestinians and Israelis alike. Currently, the balance is totally out of kilter favoring the Israelis, who can indiscriminately kill with apparent impunity. Thank you, David Burrell, for speaking out.

EAMON M. MAGEE
Kensington, Md.

Burrell's errors

David Burrell's "Warring Stories" rightly indicates that there are two conflicting versions coming out of the Middle East, but he seems to have misheard one of them. Israelis were far more than "let down" by the Palestinian leadership's response to Ehud Barak's offer to Yasir Arafat at Camp David last year. The Israelis I've spoken with were shocked not that Arafat "turned it down" but that Arafat had no counteroffer. He simply

(Continued on page 28)

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A just war?

The shooting war against drugs—the part that shoots down airplanes—is a war about which most Americans know nothing. Well, now we know. On April 20, Veronica Bowers, a Baptist missionary, and her seven-month-old daughter were killed when their plane was shot down over the jungles of eastern Peru. This tragedy gives us a brief window of opportunity to examine the human costs of how the United States conducts its war on drugs.

The Peruvian Air Force pilot who did the shooting was guided to the unarmed Cessna by an American surveillance plane flown by CIA contract employees who work for a U.S.-funded system intended to interdict drugs in the Andes, especially Peru and Colombia. The killings appear to be a terrible accident brought on by carelessness, the failure to observe proper identification and verification procedures, and the inability of the American pilots to speak Spanish. But why are we shooting down unarmed civilian planes at all? More is at stake than proper procedures. Since 1992, a joint U.S.-Peruvian operation has shot down some thirty planes, and forced still others to land and be searched. Presumably no Americans have been on board—or, at least, no obviously innocent ones.

This time five innocent Americans were shot down: mother and child were killed, the pilot was seriously injured, and Bowers's husband and son watched her and the baby die. Isn't it time to do more than conduct an accident investigation? Isn't it time to take another look at the U.S. war on drugs? What the United States encourages in Peru is illegal in this country and most others. In fact, shooting down planes would never be tolerated as part of the domestic fight against drugs. But Peru—or Peru under the now-disgraced President Alberto Fujimori and his intelligence chief, Vladimiro Montesinos (a CIA operative)—did sign on. Is this a policy that the new government of Peru should continue?

Emerging details of the American operation raise questions not only about the obvious effects of our drug war, but the hidden ones as well. First of all, the drug-war policy continues a long, sometimes secret, and often ugly history of Pentagon and CIA involvement with Latin American militaries. These militaries remain powerful, often unchecked, forces under democratic rule as they were under dictatorial rule. In part because of that history and congressional reluctance to insert the U.S. military into low-intensity guerrilla wars, the drug war in Peru and Colombia is being run through private companies that hire contract workers for various tasks, including surveillance. In Colombia, they fumigate drug crops and fly soldiers to combat zones.

The surveillance plane in Peru that spotted the Bowerses' plane was flown by workers employed by a company called Aviation Development, which in turn has a contract with the CIA. Aviation Development, though a "civilian" company, flies from Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama. Coincidentally—or not—Alabama is the home of Republican Senator Richard Shelby, chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence, the man who oversees classified work of the CIA and other intelligence agencies (*New York Times*, April 18, 2001).

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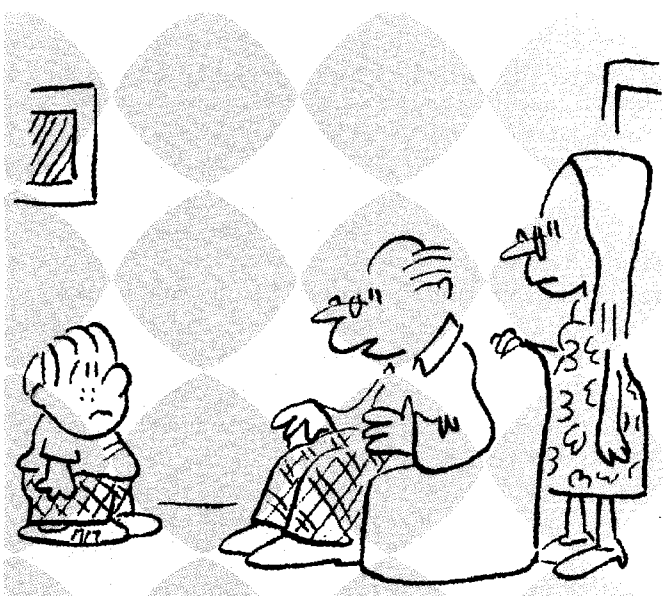
Thus, we have private companies carrying out U.S. foreign and military policy overseas. These companies hire civilian workers who have the power to call for the Peruvian Air Force to shoot down a plane, while being subject to none of the strictures placed on the U.S. military by Congress or the Code of Military Justice.

Last year, we spent $1 billion on the drug war in Latin America, a continent whose chronic underdevelopment practically requires the growing of the one cash crop U.S. buyers most want. Peasants living under the double sway of rural poverty and the power of local drug manufacturers and dealers cultivate this crop.

This isn't the first time the United States has conducted a war on drugs. Like Prohibition in the 1920s, the current war on drugs doesn't (or hasn't) stopped drug trafficking. Now as then, prohibition fosters networks of corruption, undermines law enforcement, and builds up enormous accumulations of unregulated money, often put to other criminal uses, including money laundering by banks. (The head of the Peruvian Air Force, General Nicolas Hermoza, is under investigation for taking nearly $15 million in drug money and sending it abroad.)

Ultimately the United States decided that Prohibition didn't work: alcohol would have to be controlled through regulation. Today alcohol is legal; its production is regulated, controlled, and taxed by both the states and the federal government. At least some drugs are no better or worse than alcohol. Experience, education, social mores have taught many Americans about the consequences of alcohol abuse, and, for that matter, the deadly effects of cigarette smoking. Despite their dangers and their costs to society, both substances remain legal; most who use them do so in moderation. Could a system of education, treatment, and gradual decriminalization, beginning with marijuana, bring about similar results? Admittedly, the "moderate" use of hard drugs may be an oxymoron. But so is the idea that the American appetite for drugs can be curbed by waging an essentially clandestine war a thousand miles from our borders.



"...So you see, son, what with Kent State, Vietnam, LBJ, and Watts, our generation **needed** *drugs."*

Veronica Bowers and her daughter died in Peru, victims of the drug war. It may seem a leap from that tragedy to questions about the decriminalization of drugs. Nonetheless, those deaths, together with the destruction we are raining down on Colombia today (and perhaps Ecuador tomorrow), plus America's own draconian drug sentences that keep unprecedented numbers of young black and Hispanic males in jail, as well as the corruption that inevitably follows the drug trade—all of these raise the question of whether this is a war that can be won. Can it be won without forms of corruption as bad or worse than those created by the drugs themselves and the culture and trade they encourage? Finally, is it a war that should be conducted on other people's territory rather than our own?

HAIGHT ON TRIAL

The news is pathetically familiar—yet another theologian barred from teaching, and set to writing a take-home exam for Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.

According to Robert Manning, S.J., president of the Weston School of Theology, Roger Haight, S.J., professor of theology at the school, "has begun the work of clarifying his book," *Jesus Symbol of God* (Orbis), by responding to questions from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) (*Boston Globe*, April 24). Catholic belief and practice are a great gift handed down from generation to generation and rightly guarded by the faithful and their bishops. But the secret process by which the CDF begins its investigation and then alone serves as prosecutor, judge, jury, and defense counsel is shameful, inviting subterfuge and hypocrisy. Its process is the antithesis of the careful discernment of teaching that the church needs today.

Catholics everywhere must grapple with the challenges of religious pluralism—as Haight, and others recently scrutinized, have been doing. When theologians struggle with questions about Jesus, about salvation, and about the worldwide role of the church itself, how can silencing and harassment possibly advance our understanding? What is required is dialogue, conversation, criticisms, countercriticisms, prayer, and Christian charity. This may not be easy, but it is absolutely necessary.

Haight's book was reviewed critically in *Commonweal* by Notre Dame theologian John Cavadini (October 8, 1999), while a more positive review by Fordham theologian Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J., appeared in *America* (November 6, 1999). Other reviews have appeared in more scholarly venues.

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Haight has debated his ideas with his theological peers, some of whom strongly disagree with his conclusions. We do not suggest that book reviews or theologians' discussions alone can settle the matter of church teaching. Yet these are one step in the process of clarification.

Another step might be a Vatican-sponsored public examination of the state of the question, drawing in theologians, philosophers, missiologists, and others. How does Haight's work (and that of Jacques Dupuis, S.J., for example) fit in with the work of other Catholic and Christian theologians? How do the novel elements of their theology relate to classic formulations? What impact do their conclusions have on other areas of church teaching and on church practice? This is a long process that should engage theologians, bishops, pastors, and indeed, at some level, the whole people of God.

What does the church teach? How does the church teach? These are critical matters. Who could deny that? But the CDF's secretive methods do nothing but undermine the very teaching role of the church. Neither by popular vote, nor by curial fiat will these matters be resolved, as the history of theological silencing shows (in this regard, Bernard Doering's report on the correspondence of Jacques Maritain and Charles Journet is instructive; see page 17).

Another process is needed—one that honors both the struggle of theologians to clarify and enlarge our knowledge and the responsibility of the church for right teaching. If the CDF cannot do that, the church should devise another means.

OF SEVERAL MINDS

JO McGOWAN

CASTE AWAY

Touched by the untouchable

Last week the entire staff of the school I work with here in India went river rafting. With the exception of me and the principal, none of the others had ever done it before. Most could not swim and all of them were very nervous. For three or four weeks, Paula, the principal, and I bullied and cajoled them into submission, and though they did try to stage a midnight-hour cancellation, everyone turned up on the appointed day, excited to be going.

When we reached the starting point on the banks of the Ganges River, we found that the organizers of the tour had miscalculated and because there were not enough helmets and life jackets to go around, two people would have to drop out. Paula and I conferred and decided that since we had already done it once and would certainly have other opportunities, we would give up our places. There was general outrage at this suggestion, with an unspoken but clearly implied consensus that two of the lower-level staff should be the ones to drop out.

Indeed, they themselves seemed to feel this was the only appropriate option and they had made no move to don the protective gear. With difficulty, Paula and I prevailed. We waved the boats off and drove on in the provided jeep to wait for them at the agreed-upon lunch site.

While we waited, we talked about the difficulties of working in a democratic way in such a hierarchical and stratified country. It has been a problem for us since the very beginning of the school. While we have made some progress (the watchman no longer leaps up to salute when we arrive in the morning, and occasionally, if we look very fierce, we are allowed to carry a package from one room to another), it is still far from ideal. The caste system, the lack of education among people from poor families, and five thousand years of tradition make even a pretense of equality difficult to pull off. The river rafting trip was in part an attempt to break down some of the barriers that keep the professional staff separate from the blue-collar workers, and it was ironic that it had almost fallen apart before it even began.

After two hours, we saw the boats come into view. There was a great deal of laughter and shouting and they all looked as if they were having a fabulous time. But by the time they had climbed out and clambered up the beach to where we were waiting, the old reserve had come upon the nonprofessionals. The rest, all of whom were in high spirits, teasing one another and vying to tell Paula and me all the stories, were in one large group while the helpers stood awkwardly to the side waiting to be told what to do. I went over and asked them how they had enjoyed themselves and they nodded gravely and said it had been good. Any further attempts at small talk fell flat and I drifted off to have lunch.

After the meal, two of the teachers decided to stay back and Paula and I got in the boat for the second, far more difficult section of the river. We were in the same boat as most of the helpers, and though I could see they were feeling embarrassed at our being there (in shorts and bathing suits, too!), I was looking forward to the excitement.

On a scale of one to five, the first rapid we encountered was a four. The boat pitched backward and then dangerously to one side, while the water gushed in from every direction. All of us were shouting and paddling furiously, and screaming with laughter at the same time. Ganga Ram, one of the helpers, was just in front of me and when I caught a glimpse of his face, I almost didn't recognize him, he was so animated and delighted. Maya, our cleaning lady, sat beside me, clearly terrified. As the water flooded in, soaking us to the skin and engulfing the bottom of the boat, she grabbed my arm and clung so tightly I could barely move. It was over in seconds, but the change that had come over

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the boat was astonishing. We were like a small band of survivors, with all pretense of rank and privilege gone. All of us had confronted the same forces in the same fragile boat and everyone looked the same: wet.

Of course, it didn't last. By the end of the day, when we boarded the bus to return home, we were back in our own little boxes, relating to each other in the same formal, prescribed ways. But I overheard Maya telling Deepa, another of the cleaning crew, that she had been frightened until she held on to me, and I thought maybe some little chink in her armor had opened up a bit more.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to convey just how strictly the lines are drawn here between castes and classes. Any work involving bathrooms, for example, is done only by "untouchables," and it is simply unthinkable that a high-caste person would ever stoop so low. The attitude to the work is extended to the person who does it, so that the untouchable is literally that. Maya's reaching out to hold on to me in the boat marked a profound transition in our relationship, and perhaps her sense of herself.

At our next staff meeting, Paula and I plan to reveal the fact that both of us have been untouchables in our own countries: Paula worked for many years as an aide in a special school, taking children to the bathroom and washing their bottoms; I worked as a cleaning lady in a retreat house, scouring a minimum of twenty-six toilets every day. We are hoping our announcement will be greeted first with astonishment and then with reappraisal. Whether it brings us down or them up is irrelevant. The point is to start thinking. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS

WILLIAM PFAFF

BOB KERREY'S WAR

U.S. policy condoned atrocity

You can never really be rid of the past. Events of the past can resurface and change the orbits of people's lives, as former U.S. Senator Bob Kerrey has now learned. His experience is part of America's Vietnam past, which is still an open account. The burden of Vietnam has been written about and discussed endlessly, and filmed and analyzed and explained.

But no one—except the Bob Kerreys of the war—has paid a price for the fact that U.S. forces in Vietnam repeatedly committed atrocities because of the demands made upon them by civilian authorities in Washington.

The United States is not the only country with a problem about the past. It has made an effort to confront the truth, principally through congressional initiatives, and done more than France, for example, with respect to its war, from 1954 to 1962, against popular insurrection in Algeria.

Until very recently, the French government was unwilling even to call that war a war. Mere "events" in Algeria supposedly were responsible for the national crisis that returned General Charles de Gaulle to power in 1958 and prompted him, two years later, to resolve to leave Algeria to the Algerians—even at the price of mutiny by a part of the French army.

There had been torture, summary execution, and crimes against civilians in Algeria before de Gaulle's return. He regarded torture as stupid, and ordered it ended. His predecessors had considered it indispensable. This was widely known, or assumed, at the time; but it was never acknowledged by the army or government until last November, when two retired senior officers admitted their responsibility for torture—one with candor and repentance, the other with cynicism and defiance. Even then, both Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and President Jacques Chirac opposed demands for a parliamentary inquiry.

Now the officer who defended his crimes has written a book. General Paul Aussaresses, aged eighty-three, says he will take his chances on being brought to trial. He tortured "out of patriotism," he writes, and adds that François Mitterrand—who was then France's minister of justice, later its president—had a representative at the Algerian headquarters "who covered us, and knew exactly what went on."

A historian of the period calls this book "the memoirs of a murderer." Jospin has expressed "total moral condemnation." Editorial writers say that the record of atrocities committed in Algeria must now be wrenched out of the closet in which the government has them locked away.

General Aussaresses and (allegedly) former Senator Kerrey, were executants of atrocities that were implicit in the policies of two governments. The general recognizes this, explaining how he used electricity and near-drownings to force prisoners to betray other Algerian militants. His regret is that not all of them could be made to talk before they died. "I had neither hate nor pity," he says. He wrote it all down every night in four copies, one for his commander, one for another senior officer, and one for the government's resident minister in Algeria. The fourth he kept, and still has.

The former U.S. senator says tearfully that he doesn't remember what really happened. Did he order women and children to be killed? He doesn't think so. No, he couldn't have done that. "My memory of this event," he says, "is clouded by the fog of the evening, age and desire." If Kerrey is indeed guilty of the murder of unarmed civilians, it was an act for which Lieutenant William L. Calley Jr., the platoon commander held responsible for the atrocity at My Lai, was sentenced to life imprisonment at hard labor. Calley actually served four years of house arrest. He was let off by the army for the same reason that no one—or virtually no one—who has commented on the

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Kerrey affair will say that Kerrey should be prosecuted.

The truth that the United States has officially kept secret—but which never was secret—is that atrocities against civilians were widespread in Vietnam, and were implicitly required by commanders because of the orders they were given by the government in Washington. It was notoriously known in Vietnam that the practice of "free-fire zones" produced indiscriminate civilian casualties, as did B-52 bombings, and air and armored "sweeps" in the Delta.

The Phoenix program was devoted to assassinating civilians assessed by young CIA officers as secret Viet Cong members. Civilian casualties were all but universally identified as Viet Cong soldiers in the bodycounts, which were Washington's index of success. This non-secret was kept hushed because if it were acknowledged, the people to be tried would be those in Washington who framed the war's objectives, conceived the policies, and issued the orders that produced the atrocities.

The conclusion drawn from this, with which the American public perhaps even agrees, is that it is better that the public talk about the guilt or innocence of Bob Kerrey—rather than return to the question of the guilt of those individuals under whose orders he acted. □

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Charles Murtaugh

SHUN CLONING

Scientists must speak out

Scientists say evidence is mounting "that creating healthy animals through cloning is more difficult than they had expected." So began a front-page story in the *New York Times* (March 25), highlighting the frustrations of animal cloners, and the chance that human cloning may prove technically impossible. Those worried about the ethics of human cloning have greeted this as good news, a sign that the slippery slope is leveling out. Unfortunately, the new obstacles may prove less than insurmountable in the long run—and in biotechnology, the long run often proves surprisingly short. For those whose doubts about biotechnology are expressed by the philosopher Leon Kass as "the wisdom of repugnance," it is no time to relax: The slope may soon steepen once more.

In cloning, a cellular nucleus from the adult to be cloned is injected into an egg from which the nucleus has been removed. As it turns out, the environment of the unfertilized egg, hijacked for cloning purposes, is able to "reprogram" adult nuclei, returning their DNA to a naïve, pseudo-embryonic state. As the egg develops, it follows the genetic blueprint of the adult from which the nucleus was derived, essentially producing an identical twin of that individual. But there are problems. When Ian Wilmut and his co-workers produced the cloned sheep Dolly, they caught most biologists unawares because it was thought impossible to clone a mammal. Frogs had been cloned more than twenty-five years ago, but many biologists thought that a phenomenon termed "imprinting" would prevent mammalian cloning. Imprinting confers "memory" on a developing cell, helping to distinguish adult skin cells, for instance, from heart, liver, and blood cells. Experiments in mice suggested that imprinting permanently altered the DNA, making it impossible to derive a viable embryo from an adult nucleus. Dolly changed all that. Still, the cloning of mammals is a precarious enterprise. Wilmut himself acknowledged that cloning was inefficient and fraught with grotesque failure, and he strongly advised against trying to clone humans. Even the most experienced researchers are able to generate viable clones only 2 to 5 percent of the time. The failures appear to stem from the imprinting phenomenon, which had been discounted post-Dolly: the genetic absolution conferred by the egg turns out to be inefficient at best, and adult memories persist in the DNA of cloned embryos, interfering with their development.

This point was made by MIT developmental biologist Rudolf Jaenisch during testimony before a House subcommittee on March 28, and in a forceful article he co-authored with Wilmut, "Don't Clone Humans!" (*Science*, March 28). As Jaenisch and others stressed before Congress, the high failure rate in animal cloning should make human cloning unthinkable. The proponents of cloning, a motley crew of UFO cultists and fringe physicians, argue that they will succeed in humans where experts have failed in animals. Their position is, of course, untenable. For now, human cloning will probably end up prohibited. However, there is a danger in arguing against cloning on technical grounds alone: Once the procedure is perfected, it implicitly becomes ethically permissible.

For the time being, human cloning remains a fantasy, well outside the scientific mainstream. Nonetheless, few biologists or physicians have spoken out against it as a matter of principle, and professional groups have called for little more than a moratorium on efforts to clone a human being. Now is the time for cloning opponents to reach out to the research community and engage it in a conversation that is grounded in social ethics rather than technique. At the moment, scientists are insulated from such considerations. The congressional hearings of March 28 were neatly divided into a "science" portion, in which Jaenisch spoke, and an "ethics" portion that featured the testimony of cloning advocates and of bioethicists, the presumed conscience of the scientific community. The bioethicists' qualifications in this regard are marred by their lack of consensus; the testimony before the subcommittee ranged from Arthur Caplan, who forthrightly called for a ban on cloning in the name of individual dignity, to Gregory Pence, who objected to the term "clone" as

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a pejorative, analogous to "chick" (he offered "delayed twin" as a more palatable alternative). In any event, as Gordon Marino has pointed out in these pages ("Avoiding Moral Choices," March 23), the existence of a class of ethics experts does not relieve scientists, or anyone else, of the burden of moral responsibility.

Many practices already skulk at the margins of society that would deform our social space if they became the norm; "swinging," for example, or hallucinogenic drug use. Should the day of the clones arrive, our best hope of preventing the practice from becoming widespread is to persuade mainstream scientists and physicians to shun it. I am hopeful that the scientific and medical communities will respond to these dangers first as sons, daughters, and parents, realizing that their relationships are as threatened as anyone's by the prospect of a brave new cloning world. In fact, in their *Science* article, Jaenisch and Wilmut prefaced their warning about the technical dangers of cloning with the acknowledgment that "there are many social and ethical reasons why we would never be in favor of copying a person." Arresting our descent on the slippery slope will require that scientists themselves elaborate on those reasons. □

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Clayton Sinyai

ACADEMIC SWEATSHOPS

The higher unionizing

On March 1, hours before a threatened strike at New York University by graduate teaching and research assistants, the school's administration agreed to bargain with the graduate assistants' union. The historic pact places NYU graduate assistants in the forefront of a national organizing movement among contingent faculty that aims to secure decent working conditions while defending academic values. The agreement followed a three-year fight by graduate assistants to secure recognition. Last year the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) had ruled that, as university employees, graduate assistants were entitled to union representation if they wished. In November, it was announced that the graduate assistants had chosen to join the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2110. (The UAW represents graduate assistants on a number of other campuses, most prominently in the University of California system.) But NYU's administration continued to balk, despite an NLRB complaint against it for refusal to bargain. Only after a public campaign by the union, a strike threat, and back-channel negotiations did the university agree to negotiate.

The organizing effort at NYU is not an isolated case but part of a rising tide of union activity on university campuses. Organized labor, in a bid to renew its mission as a social movement rather than an interest group, has reached out to academics, religious groups, and social activists. University campuses have reflected this outreach with a proliferation of student groups such as United Students against Sweatshops, as well as with increased campus labor organizing activity. The NYU graduate students' campaign for recognition included a visit by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney to NYU President L. Jay Oliva.

The main reason for the leap in organizing activity, however, is to be found in the changing face of higher education. Universities, under pressure to reduce costs, are transferring more and more of their undergraduate teaching to lower-cost graduate assistants and adjunct faculty. The case of "part-time" adjunct faculty is especially striking. Traditionally, adjunct faculty were successful professionals in their fields who would teach an occasional course for a small stipend and, in the process, enrich the university with "real-world" experience. Today, many universities see adjuncts as inexpensive substitutes for full-time tenured faculty. Adjunct positions are often filled by Ph.D.s who, though nominally part-time, actually cobble together a full-time course load at half the salary (or less) of a full-time tenured professor—and with no benefits. Whereas adjuncts were less than a quarter of all faculty in 1970, today they are about half.

The effects of this "casualization" of university education, as it has come to be known, are deleterious to the university's educational mission. When less than half the instructional faculty are protected by tenure, academic freedom—at least in principle—is endangered. Furthermore, contingent faculty cannot provide undergraduates with the sort of contact possible with full-time, tenured professors. Are adjuncts, who may teach courses on two or three university campuses, and graduate students, who are students themselves, likely to offer undergraduates the same quality of academic counseling? Will they have the time or the energy for the same excellence in the classroom? Research by the American Association of University Professors (a professional association of university faculty that engages in collective bargaining) suggests the answer is often no. Thirty percent of part-time liberal-arts faculty reported no scheduled office hours, and adjuncts were 50 percent less likely to require essay exams than full-time faculty. Adjuncts and graduate students who deliver quality instruction, the AAUP's Rich Moser argues, do so in spite of the conditions of their employment.

Kimberly Johnson, an NYU teaching assistant, agrees, and hopes that unionization can help. Stipends averaging $13,000 per year are not enough to live on in New York City, and graduate students are obliged to seek outside jobs to supplement their incomes. "When you have graduate students who aren't working three or four jobs they can focus on their teaching work," she says.

The standard objection to campus unionization is that higher education is not a business. Collective bargaining is ap-

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propriate to workers in private enterprise, but it does not belong in universities where the purpose is not to accumulate profits but to foster learning. But the increasing use of contingent instructional faculty suggests that the university has already gone a long way toward adopting business modes of behavior, and the intrusion of for-profit educational institutions like the University of Phoenix will only increase the competitive pressures toward this transformation.

Many activists in faculty unions think that the best response to these developments is to acknowledge them. Barbara Bowen, president of the Professional Staff Congress—a union representing City University of New York faculty, full-time, part-time, and graduate assistants—says that "academics are workers and we must learn to defend ourselves as workers."

This is precisely why administrators argue that collective bargaining in the academy can only endanger the university's academic mission. NYU tried to persuade the NLRB and the public that graduate assistants were not eligible for the right to organize because they were students rather than workers, and that academic issues might eventually be introduced into collective bargaining—to the detriment of the university's academic mission. But this put the university in the difficult position of arguing that graduate students—who were hired not for conventional employment considerations but rather their "academic credentials and promise"—were likely to make demands that would hurt the university's educational mission! In the March agreement, NYU and the UAW agreed to move forward with negotiations under a shared understanding that a number of academic decisions, such as the structure and content of curriculum, would be excluded from the bargaining table. University officials point to this agreement, rather than the strike threat, as the breakthrough that allowed negotiations to begin.

But the larger point remains. The ambiguity about the status of contingent instructors at the university arises exactly from that which makes them different from so many other employees: they have chosen their work not merely as a means to a paycheck but out of a love for education itself. Consequently, graduate students and adjunct instructors don't want to gut the university's mission but fulfill it. That can't be done when the economic pursuit of short-term economic efficiencies comes at the expense of more enduring educational ends. Tenured faculty, adjunct faculty, and graduate assistants are all deeply committed to the mission of the university, and the university is more likely to be enhanced than endangered when they gain the right to organize. While it may be a bitter pill for some university administrators, collective bargaining for adjunct faculty and graduate students is ultimately in the best interest of higher education and offers it the best prospect for protecting academic values. □

Clayton Sinyai *is a Ph.D. candidate in political science at Rutgers University, where he is studying the labor movement and its contribution to American democracy.*

We have a winner!

Congratulations to **Anna Nussbaum**, seventeen-year-old junior at Palmer High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, for being selected the winner of the ***Commonweal* Essay Contest for Younger Writers**. Over 150 young writers from the United States and Canada, ranging in age from eleven to twenty-seven, submitted essays on the subject of being Catholic in contemporary America. The contest was made possible, in part, by a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc.

Nussbaum's essay, which will be published in the **September 14** issue of *Commonweal*, explores the tension experienced by a generation of Catholics who lack a well-formed vocabulary of faith:

> "We're a generation trying to write a dictionary of belief without words. Spoiled. Confused. Unwanted. Unformed. We have no place from which to begin. But faith persists, and all around me I find believers."

Commonweal has intermittently sponsored writing contests (the last was in 1995). Ms. Nussbaum is the youngest winner in the magazine's seventy-seven-year history.

We express our thanks to all those who entered the contest.

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L'ÉGLISE DE FRANCE

The church in a postreligious age

Steven Englund

One of the reassurances of writing about French Catholicism is that nothing is ever new. You know what the categories are—ultramontane, gallican, liberal, *intégriste*, *laïcité*, anticlerical, etc.—they were virtually *invented* here, and they never change. I have been talking with French Catholics, often the same ones, for more than three decades, and they are fighting the same battles and saying (largely) the same things.

Until now. Now things are different, and it makes me miss the old days. I think the players miss the old days, too. The battle is still, as ever, an intra-French one (with Rome occasionally weighing in on one side), but these days it is mostly a losing struggle between Catholicism and what appears to all sides to be the relentlessly incoming tides of history.

But that's for later. Let's start at the latest beginning. Some months ago, a book appeared with the provocative title of *Christianity Accused*. The author was René Rémond, a Catholic and France's leading historian of politics. Besides being a member of *l'Académie française* (touted as this literary nation's club of top forty writers), Rémond is a familiar face on French television, especially during elections. He could easily have been named Minister of National Education in a moderate government. (*Commonweal* readers will recall him as the scholar named by Cardinal Decourtray of Lyons to head a panel of investigators into Paul Touvier's role during the Occupation.) Rémond is, in sum, a product and a cherisher of institutions, an octogenarian known for his moderation and evenhandedness, a man whose serenity has probably not been ruffled since the war. Until now.

It was thus worthy of comment when a new book under his byline—a short work, written in Q&A format with an editor at a Catholic publishing house—betrayed genuine inner turmoil and chagrin over the fate of Christianity in his homeland. The book also makes a few "radical" suggestions to Rome—giving priests renewable contracts, granting formal clerical status to all "ministers," including women, etc.—and has been discussed everywhere, from the Communist daily *l'Humanité* to a front-page article in *Le Monde*, from train stations to airports. It has appeared on the bestseller list, an unusual tribute for a scholar-author, even in France.

The author spends much time complaining about familiar—one almost wants to say "good old-fashioned"—unofficial anticlericalism and generalized antireligious prejudice. He inveighs against Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's elimination of any reference to Christianity or Europe's Christian heritage in the European Union's recent human-rights declaration. (He might have mentioned how small-minded the Jospin government can be with certain Catholic institutions—military chaplaincies, for example—about budgeting and licenses.)

It also gauls (pun intended) the author that Catholic membership and practice are held to expectations that no one would apply to trade unions or political parties. He is certainly right; any of the latter would consider that it had died and gone to heaven if it could field once a year what the church draws for its weekend Masses. Even *Le Monde*, a newspaper founded by Catholic liberals, has evolved to a slight anticlericalism, capable of a catty headline, such as this one for World Youth Day ("JMJ," in its French acronym): "Illusions of the JMJ." Rémond is right to ask if any other religion or movement had brought together a quarter of this crowd of over a million people, "Would [the headline writer] have considered speaking of illusion?"

So yes, French Catholicism is a minority, he agrees, but it is still the largest organized one in the Republic, and why is it the only one to be judged on its past not its present? The church's sensitive dealing with immigrants, its genuine openness to other religions, and the bishops' penitence for church inaction in the war have all gone un- or under-reported. Finally, Catholicism in France all too often sees the secular press reduce its entire doctrine and witness to the magis-

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terium's stand on mores, moral individualism being the litmus test *par excellence* for one's "modernity" in France.

People other than the devout Rémond agree the church is getting something of a raw deal these days. Thus the agnostic philosopher Marcel Gauchet wrote recently in a much-cited article, "the Catholic minority is the only persecuted one, culturally speaking, in contemporary France."

Familiar complaints aside, what is poignant in Rémond's book, making it more of a *cri de coeur* than a brief, is its tone. He acknowledges that "the peaceful face of the Buddha fascinates people more than the face of Christ crucified," and that "Jesus appears to young people as a 'loser.'" What disquiets this public intellectual's soul, leaving him restless and sad, after a career that should make him fulfilled and serene, is the fate he senses in store for his church. While she may be insulated against ultimate destruction, she is by no means guaranteed survival as a significant public presence in the land of Joan of Arc and Thérèse of Lisieux.

Rémond is not alone in his despond. I had a frank exchange with Monsignor Jean-Marie Di Falco, an assistant bishop for Paris, who admitted that what concerns him more than the admittedly revived anticlericalism or even anti-Christianity is the relentless march of secularization. "At least our enemies take us seriously and know who we are. But most people haven't the faintest clue or much interest what the church is, one way or the other," he said.

His lament brings me back to Marcel Gauchet, the most lucid philosopher-critic of religion to emerge on the French scene since Jean-Paul Sartre. At fifty-five, he is director of studies at the prestigious School of Advanced Studies in the Social Science. His path-breaking *The Disenchantment of the World* made a huge splash when it was published fifteen years ago; it has since been translated into many languages, including English.

A four-hundred-page study of nearly infinite complexity (Gauchet's prose can be impenetrable but it rewards the effort), the book limns the now classic view of Christianity as "the religion of the end of religion." Put with brutal economy, we might say that Christianity has done itself out of existence. It gave rise to a faith that turned against the self-subjugation that all religion classically is. The Christian God liberated people from the ancient world's omnipresent gods, but the growth in freedom led to the modern state of affairs wherein religion as the great refusal (of freedom) is seeing itself refused.

Adept at historical analysis, Gauchet also has a gimlet eye for the present. In his view, the high, arid, over-oxygenated plain onto which we moderns have debouched from our five-thousand-year trek through "religion" is at once painful, disequilibrating, and exhilarating. The "autonomous self" we now inhabit must be "constituted," for it is no longer "presented." Perhaps his most brilliant insight—if underappreciated and certainly unanswered (and not just in France)—is the distinction he draws between religion as personal faith and religion as the designing structure of society (the word "culture," after all, comes from "cult"). Gauchet's postmodern world is not one whit less postreligious for all that it may be—often is—"in continuity with religious man." The "new structure of social time" has, as one of its leading hallmarks, the fact that many people become religious. Paradoxically, a flight to conversion is a common response to history's structural "exit" from religion. "We can imagine the extreme of a society comprised entirely of believers, yet beyond the religious." It is a matter of choice. Some may elect a generalized spirituality, some a devout form of orthodox practice (which they may then "de-accession," and move on to another).

The foregoing is all by way of preface to Gauchet's new book which came out in 1998 and is indubitably part of the culture Rémond is reacting against. *Religion in Democracy* delivers another sheaf of finely wrought examinations of individual religiosity in a late age. Gauchet is particularly strong in considering "the great spiritual event of the end of the century"—the collapse of various world-historical ideologies (notably communism, but also "the religion of art").

As for Catholicism, Gauchet examines what he calls a second "Copernican revolution" in religious consciousness. People now have (and are aware that they have) an insistent need for "sense," for meaning which has outstripped the capacity of any given religious institution or doctrine to deliver "truth" in a form plausible to postmodern culture. But then people don't ask for truth so much as they ask for meaning (*pace* the *First Things* crowd). Meanwhile religious doubt has come out of the closet and now stands fully acknowledged. (In Gauchet's language: "The authenticity of disquiet is stronger than the firmness of conviction as an exemplary form of belief, even in established churches.")

The average person (even the few remaining in the pew) has, in sum, internalized so much of the prevailing critique of religion, especially that of religion's academic experts, that he or she knows perfectly well it isn't "true." (A recent poll showed that 78 percent of French people aged eighteen and over do not believe "any one religion is the true one." Seventy-one percent agreed that "in our day, each must define his or her own religion independently of the churches.") But their insatiable thirst for a (social-religious) "identity" keeps them going to Mass. "Believing without belonging," a phrase made famous by the British sociologist of religion, Grace Davie, has given way across the Channel to "belonging without believing."

Finally, Gauchet examines the church's return to the stage in its new role of aggrieved, declining star. "Religion's decline," he writes, is temporarily making it "popular" again, as a topic of news, entertainment, and debate. An aspect of both its decline and its popularity is the proliferating epiphenomenon of religion's popularity as circus. World Youth Day in Paris, in 1997, the debate provoked by *l'Humanité*'s "Jesus" issue, the high ratings of a television series on "Christ," and the popularity of religion as an academic field are all good examples.

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Incredibly, Gauchet's new book, like his earlier one, ends up pleasing (or at least not dismaying) most Christians. It is an unquestionably fascinating point of this story that so few, if any, attack Gauchet by name. *Au contraire*, the philosopher is widely appreciated for a "generous" analysis of religion that readily grants Christianity the status of *fons et origo* of Western society, for showing how this religion suffuses contemporary social language, values, and institutions. Such an attitude is a welcome relief in a France where brutal and ignorant forms of anticlericalism still flourish. Gauchet's occasional readiness to note or applaud the church's efforts on behalf of the poor or the marginal, or to speak out on Catholicism's behalf when it is belittled, has all but endeared him to individual Christians, none of whom—even his intellectual critics (here or in the States, I might add)—has come close to offering a full-dress refutation of his views.

Catholicism and its archenemy (French Republicanism) are both going the way of the small street café in France...

This is more so in the case of Gauchet's new book because French Catholics are delighted by the deadly accuracy Gauchet brings to examining the decline of the very *laïciste* (anticlericalist) culture which has traditionally made life hard for Catholics. Catholicism and its archenemy (French Republicanism) are both going the way of the small street café in France, but their advocates so hate each other that they take pleasure in one another's pending demise.

The historical state of affairs limned by Gauchet is further attested to by the church's truly wretched financial state (the average French diocese makes do with a fraction of what is available to its American counterpart) as well as the relentless attrition in the rates of even the "seasonal conformities" (baptism, marriage, funeral) that were thought to unchangingly characterize French Catholics' participation in their faith. The French church's response to this crisis has been to stage a generalized *repli* on Rome and tradition—a "falling back" led mainly by the extraordinary archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger. (See my "The Force of Cardinal Lustiger," *Commonweal*, April 25, 1986.) Lustiger remains controversial here but has, in a very forceful and long—twenty-year—episcopate more or less imposed his leadership on the entire French church. No surprise this. Historically, rallying to the papacy kept the *église de France* alive in the Revolution when the guillotine set achoppin', and arguably kept it stronger than it might otherwise have been throughout the long nineteenth century, in the teeth of semi-official anticlericalism.

This "strategy"—if that term be adequate to capture something as debated, nuanced, semiconscious, and reflexive as the public position(s) of an institution of 95 dioceses and 19,462 parishes—was recently dubbed "Catholic neoclassicism" by the theologian Henri Bourgeois, writing in *Études*, France's respected Jesuit review. Bourgeois examines the contrast—which, despite his bland prose, soon emerges as a deep dichotomy—between old-fashioned ("classical") French Catholicism and the new mélange ("neoclassical") imported from Spain, Italy, and the Vatican. The former is liberal, intellectual, Gallican; it is into social action and intellectual debate. The latter is mystical, fideistic, evangelical, and Roman, into pilgrimage, procession, chant, and punctilious (often Latin) liturgy.

The former counts among its adepts most of the remaining intellectual forces of the French Catholic church: Rémond himself; Paul Valadier, the leading Jesuit philosopher; Jean-Louis Schlegel, the active Catholic editor (and a former Jesuit) at the prestigious French publishing house of Seuil; Jean-François Six, a writer and leader in the *Mission de France* (the French worker-priest movement, launched to great huzzahs in the 1950s, but now *mal vu* by church authority here and in Rome); and a handful of the older diocesan bishops who are without national influence and rather like to keep it that way. These people amount to a small, but proud remnant of the glory days of French intellectual Catholicism when Mauriac, de Lubac, Maritain, Congar, Bernanos, and many others flourished on the public scene. Still, traditional ("classical") Catholicism certainly accounts for a significantly larger percentage of Catholics-in-the-pews than does the new brand of neoclassicism.

The latter, however, are younger and have a strong edge with their local bishop, with Rome, and with the media looking for "new" stories. They have in Lustiger a phenomenon of a leader of whom they are terrifically proud (as are most of the "classicals," for that matter) and are staunchly backed in their daily struggle to be the church in France by the Vatican, reinforced by frequent papal visits (there are very few nations that John Paul II has visited more often). They do, in fact, count some intellectual lights among them, including France's leading younger philosopher, Jean-Luc Marion, of the Sorbonne and the University of Chicago. But the intellectuals around Lustiger curiously do not speak out as public Catholics, the way the liberals noted above do, and so do not play the role they might otherwise.

"The new bet on mysticism, fideism, and orthodoxy" (Jean-François Six's phrase) is not one that Marcel Gauchet would make. In a frank interview (of the sort I doubt he would give to the French press), Gauchet noted that the policy of "tightening the ranks" of a dwindling phalanx of orthodoxy will "only bring quicker eradication." He urges the bishops instead to "go with the flow" of Vatican II—that is, put a damper on proclaiming kerygma (à la Cardinal Ratzinger) while reaching out beyond the church's regular membership, engaging in community-building with immigrants of all (but not usually Catholic) faiths, lobbying more effectively for

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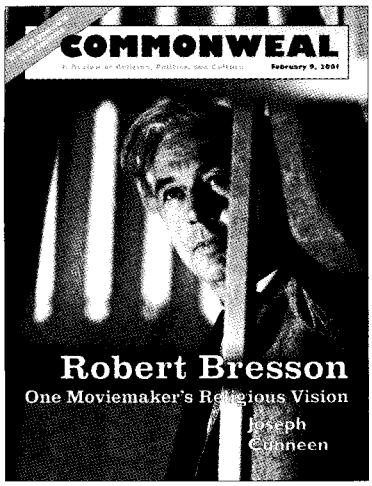

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political clout, as do other social groups, taking a hand at the "ritualizing of important life moments"—funerals without formal Masses, devising rituals for nonbelievers or for ex-, nonpracticing, or angry Catholics.

Gauchet advocates a greatly increased use of the laity, but particularly of women, in all church ministries. In sum, he feels, were the French Catholic church "to play a psychologically and socially sensitive role in French life," were it to "be catholic with a small *c*," then on his telling there would be no "reason for absolute pessimism." The latter is the case, says Gauchet, in England, where the Established Church may as well pack in its crosiers and call it a day.

The foregoing suggestions would be labeled suicidal or insane by the "neoclassicals" (and probably a few "classicals" as well), if any of them were aware. But even Gauchet the theoretician is not understood. When one hears the cardinal-archbishop of Vienna suggest, from the pulpit of Notre Dame, that large attendance at the (British) National Gallery's exposition on "Seeing the Saviour" offers serious argument against "the disenchantment of the world," or when a French diocesan bishop writes a book inveighing against (among much else) the practice of Halloween—not because it is an American importation, but because it is pagan and diabolic—then one does wonder if they "get" what Gauchet is saying.

But there are Catholics who have read their Gauchet and "got" him. Jean-Louis Schlegel, for instance, an opponent of neoclassicism and a staunch believer in French Catholicism's return to a public intellectual stance, concluded an influential article with words hauntingly reminiscent of both Gauchet the theoretician and the counselor: "the conviction of having a sense of, or being in, 'Truth' has never preserved anyone from meaninglessness. It is only in accepting the weakness of belief itself, in institutions without strength, that European Catholics will regain the possibility and the desire to express themselves—and perhaps [regain] their credibility, too."

Protestant Jean-Paul Willaime, a prominent sociologist, argues in the final chapter of *Christianity's Great Inventions* (1999, edited by René Rémond, of course) that Catholicism should become "otherly religious"—that is, in addition to thoroughly declericalizing itself and demythologizing its doctrines, it must strive to "permit men of the third millennium to live, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer used to say, 'without God'" while yet living "before God and with God." These are remarkable statements for sincere Christians to make, and while some might say they are throwing out the babies with the holy water, or concocting the religious equivalent of marriage without sex, love, or commitment, yet no one could deny that they are views which resonate to the times.

Cardinal Henri de Lubac, S.J.—a most orthodox thinker (except when he was deemed not)—found time and reason during the long German Occupation of France to ponder an even greater atheist thinker than Marcel Gauchet—indeed a true "antitheist": Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the writer who out-did Karl Marx in influence as a "father" of French socialism. The business-like and academic Gauchet displays none of Proudhon's anger and unrelenting, tormented fascination with Christianity (in that, Proudhon was truly a nineteenth-century atheist). The young de Lubac, for his part, was fascinated by Proudhon's torment and fascination. The future cardinal isolates one observation of Proudhon's:

> A religion's hour has come when a troubled conscience puts to itself the question, not whether that religion is true: doubts about dogma are not sufficient for the downfall of a religion; nor whether it needs to be reformed: reforms in matters of faith are proof of religious vitality; but whether, that religion, so long reputed to be the protector and mainstay of [society's] morals, is equal to its task...

Proudhon, in short, is agreeing with Gauchet in the latter's judgment that a religion departs from the historical scene when it can no longer provide a systematic social structure to inculturate values. And de Lubac? He agrees that this is indeed the point. "That objection," and it alone, writes the future cardinal—not without some fear and trembling, one suspects—"is the only one, it seems to me, which is worth anything. It is the only one which gets to the bottom of things." One can only wonder what he would have to say today.

Meanwhile, in the trenches, the church's core of "classical" and "neoclassical" believers—this vibrant and energetic, if tiny, minority of around 2 million people ("but that's still a lot," one can almost hear Professor Rémond remind us)—sticks to its last. They are led by bishops, most of whom know their Gauchet but who don't let that stop them. "*Pardonnez-moi, monsieur, mais je ne suis pas désenchanté*," Monsignor Di Falco told me, while granting in the next breath that yes, perhaps Gauchet was right about "the times." Di Falco and others here are well aware that "the tides of history" may be, probably are, against them; they know about doubt within themselves and within their flocks, as about vast and suspicious indifference without; they know, in a word, about postmodernism.

Yet they persist, and they constitute "a real Christianity, not just the vast sociological phenomenon of former times." Those are the words of the great historian, Jean-Marie Mayeur, professor at the Sorbonne. Though himself a liberal ("classical") Catholic, he is yet proud of Lustiger, as he is proud of John Paul II. He is proud to be an active member of a "small minority" that knows and lives its faith better than did the millions in the era when the church (and the monarchy) ran the show.

One could close with Wallace Stevens's line, "The final belief is to believe in a fiction which you know to be a fiction, there being none other," but to do so would not be fair to the practicing minority. So let economist and philosopher Joseph Schumpeter put a similar thought with more prosaic, but more applicable, eloquence, "To realize the relative validity of one's convictions and yet stand for them unflinchingly, is what distinguishes a civilized man from a barbarian."

Eh bien, pourquoi pas? □

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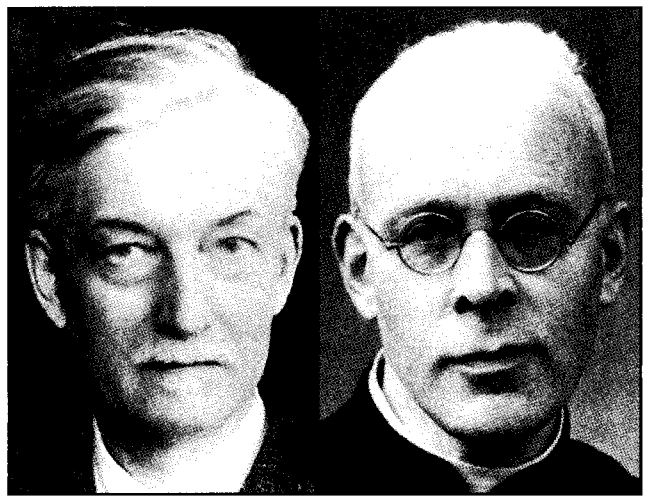
SILENT DISSENTER

Jacques Maritain on contraception

Bernard Doering

Jacques Maritain, French philosopher and intellectual, played a crucial role in the revival of Thomistic philosophy early in the twentieth century, as well as in reconciling the Catholic church and democratic institutions. Today conservatives commonly regard Maritain as a model of a docile Catholic intellectual. But his fifty-year correspondence with Abbé Charles Journet—Swiss theologian, consultant at Vatican II, and eventually, cardinal of the church—tells a more interesting and complex story.

Maritain first met Journet with the founding of the Cercles Thomistes in 1922; they corresponded from that time until Maritain's death in 1973 (Journet died in 1979). From their first meeting, the two became close friends and Maritain chose the younger man as his "*confidant-théologien*," which he remained over the half century of their friendship. Almost eighteen hundred of their letters survive and are being published (*Journet/Maritain Correspondence*, Paris: Editions Saint-Paul); the first three of a projected six volumes are in print. Volumes II and III contain a surprising number of references to questions of human sexuality, particularly those concerning birth control. Even someone with an extensive familiarity with Maritain's writings would never suspect that he was preoccupied with such questions, but in a letter dated December 6, 1934, Maritain wrote to Journet: "I'm afraid I've been boring you with my questions on the theology of marriage. Please excuse me." (*Journet/Maritain Correspondence*, Vol II, letter no. 498—future references will be indicated by volume number and the number of the letter). I suspect that Maritain's questions resulted from the promulgation four years earlier of Pius XI's encyclical *Casti connubii* (1930).



Mums the word

Six months before its promulgation, Journet, who as a young priest had been appointed professor of dogmatic theology at the University of Fribourg, wrote to Maritain that he feared being sent back to parish work if he were too outspoken on certain questions. "I don't want to put myself at risk on any question at all. There are certain problems where I think that boldness would actually amount to imprudence (for example, the very strict positions of the church on continence in marriage)" (II, 322). Journet had good reason to be careful.

In 1935, the Dominican Benoît Lavaud, professor of moral theology at the University of Fribourg and a close friend of the two men, published a book on marriage: *Le monde moderne et le mariage chrétien*. Lavaud apparently put himself at considerable risk, for he began immediately to encounter difficulties with the ecclesiastical authorities. That same year he was ordered by his superior general to limit his activities exclusively to preparing and teaching his classes. Journet wrote to Maritain: "So he can no longer do any writing. In this regard, good Father Lavaud is undergoing considerable trials. He has been very popular in Fribourg, was very much in demand as a preacher, and was held in great esteem by the bishop. But certain fathers among the Dominicans concluded that he must not be preparing his courses, and have denounced him to Rome. He explained himself, but the father general told him that, to avoid any possible occasion for complaint, he should refuse any invitation to participate in the ministry. He told me that he has the impression that his difficulties are dormant for the moment, but they will all start up again" (II, 503).

And they did. Near the end of that year, Maritain was also in hot water with ecclesiastical authorities because of his connection with the periodical *Sept*, his contributions to the leftist periodical *Vendredi*, his position on the Spanish Civil War, and the calumnies spread by Action Française in Rome. Journet, himself in trouble with his bishop over the Spanish

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situation, wrote to Maritain: "Neither I, nor Father Lavaud...is surprised at this inhuman way of acting" (II, 541).

In 1941, Lavaud was deprived of his chair at Fribourg and sent off to the Dominican House at Toulouse because of what he wrote concerning the "ends" of marriage. Journet wrote to Maritain:

"Poor Father Lavaud is in deep and agonizing trouble with Rome because he is considered too much in favor of the theory which insists that conjugal communion is one of the ends of marriage" (III, 785). Of course, in *Gaudium et spes* (47, 52), Vatican II proclaims this same thesis, along with others defended by Lavaud in the thirties and forties (II, 490, footnote 1).

In 1948, from Princeton, Maritain sent a letter to Journet, accompanied by a note titled "Apropos of Birth Control" which is important and surprising enough to be quoted in its entirety. He wrote: "In order that intercourse between spouses may not be hindered from attaining its natural finalities and in order that it be morally correct: It is not necessary that the *intention of procreating children* be present. (The woman may have undergone an operation that made her sterile, or she might be beyond childbearing age.) Moreover, the intention not to procreate may be present, as in the case of the Ogino method [the rhythm method], which the church has not condemned. So it is not the intention of the agent, the intention not to procreate, which makes the practice of birth control sinful. Then what does make it sinful? Certainly not an *intention* (*finis operantis*) *extrinsic* to the act of intercourse itself, but rather an alteration introduced into the very exercise of that act, which turns it away from its finality *in its very excellence*. (For example: the case of Onan.)

...the church defends a truth by blockading it with ways of thinking that simple human experience has left way behind...

"So let us suppose that one day science invents a product which, taken orally in the form of a pill or subcutaneously by injection, renders a woman sterile for a given period of time. Will spouses who use this drug for a proper and acceptable motive and in order to have a child only when their reason tells them it is good to do so be guilty of a moral failing? By no means! Their human reason intervened actively at the same point where with the Ogino method human reason calculated very simply to profit by what nature was doing on its own: it is impossible to see how this could in any way be culpable.

"One may very well ask if technical progress will not eventually find a solution to the great moral problem of birth control, by giving man the means to avoid procreation without altering the act of intercourse in its very exercise in order to turn it away from its proper end. In the past there was no contraceptive technique other than that of Onan. And the regulation of the number of children in families was established by sickness or death (infant mortality). In the future we may very well have contraceptive techniques which will make it possible to avoid procreation, all the while leaving to the sexual act its full normality and its finality in the exercise of that act. And in this case the control of human reason will establish the regulation of the number of children.

"If what I say is correct, the practical casuistic problem would be to determine if some contraceptive method or other alters the act in its very exercise or maintains its full normality, as in the theoretical case I have considered. But the question of principle would be resolved. A doctor whom I consulted on this question (one that is impossible to avoid in the United States) assured me that in his opinion certain of the methods actually in use here pertain to the second category [that is, maintaining full normality] rather than to the first [that is, altering the act in its very exercise]" (III, 977a).

(The notes that Journet sent to Maritain in response to his remarks on birth control are not included in their subsequent exchanges of letters; they may have been lost. The next three letters are from Journet adding details and texts that he had forgotten to put in his lost responses to Maritain.)

In November, Maritain wrote from Princeton concerning his notes on birth control: "It is enormous for me that you do not judge them to be heretical. I know that *Casti connubii* has an entirely different ring to it. But precisely, if I am right (or better, if we are right) it must be said that this question offers another of those tragic examples where the church defends a truth by blockading it with ways of thinking that simple human experience has left way behind (*à l'aveuglette*) [that is, like a blind man feeling his way in the dark]. The day when the church would admit such techniques as we are speaking about, nothing would have been changed in its doctrine, but those souls whom the church has completely and fundamentally mobilized against every idea of any technique whatsoever of this kind and in behalf of a philosophy of procreation without any control of reason will understand nothing about this whole question" (III, 985).

Two weeks later, on December 2, Journet wrote to Maritain: "Jacques, for this terrible question of eugenics, I'm afraid that as a support for you I'm rather unsteady on my own feet. What I wanted to say is that since moralists say that everything is saved if the conjugal act can be accomplished to all appearances, they should have no objection to hor-

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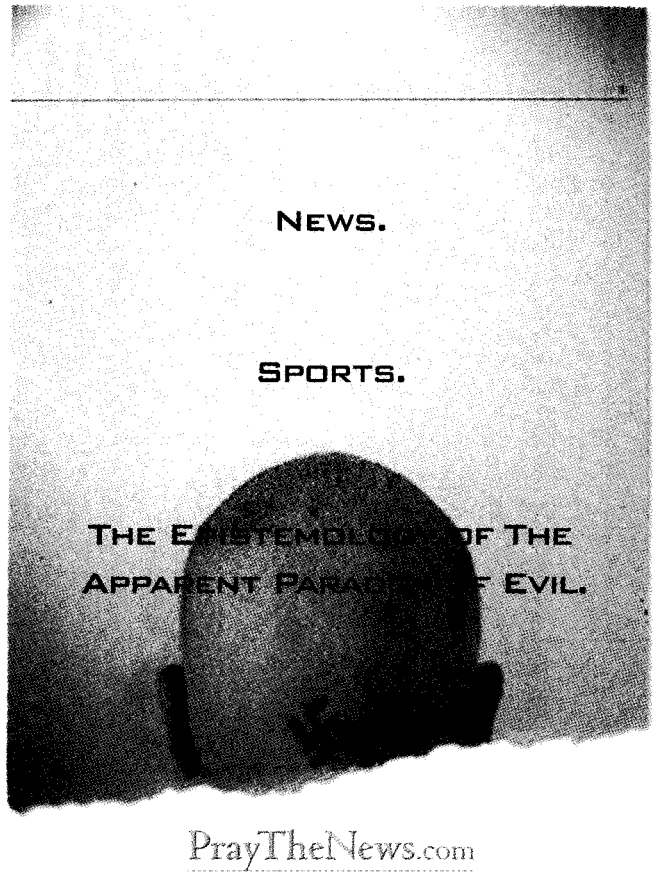
monal injections. Will they then argue that this is a case of mutilation? They do so in the case where Fallopian tubes are tied...So they consider mutilation in a functional sense....I have always had a problem admitting (though I do so by authority) an *essential* difference between the Ogino method and contraceptive precautions. It seems to me they are hypnotized by the physical. So an injection becomes an objection that vexes the moralists" (III, 986).

This is the last reference to the problem of birth control in the first three volumes of the correspondence. These letters were exchanged twenty to thirty years before the firestorm occasioned by *Humanae vitae*. A footnote appended to Maritain's note "Apropos of Birth Control," which I cited above, tells us that in 1968 Paul VI's encyclical letter concerning responsible parenthood would lead Journet and Maritain to take up once again the troubling question of birth control and to comment on the controversy it stirred up within and without the church. These letters are to appear in volume VI, and are unlikely to be made public for several years.

Why did two respected thinkers who were clearly preoccupied with the church's position on human sexuality remain silent on this important question? Both of them were certainly ready to speak openly on controversial political and social questions; both were in trouble because of positions they took publicly on the church and democracy and on the Spanish Civil War.

There were serious indications that Maritain's *Integral Humanism* was about to be placed on the Index. In 1936, he had received a letter from Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., urging him to provide firmer assurances to his critics in Rome who saw in Maritain, as Garrigou wrote, "a *tendency* all of whose dire consequences they are anxious to point out" (II, 579a). Garrigou-Lagrange continued: "I beg of you, give them firmer assurances, so that all the good you have done may not be compromised. The Spanish bishops were not at all pleased with what you said at Santander [that is, in a series of lectures that became *Integral Humanism*]. They must have written about this to the secretary of state [Cardinal Pacelli]. In my opinion you are venturing out on a terrain you do not know enough about, and you bring with you habits of thinking that no longer have any place in the present contingencies...I beseech you all the more strongly to follow my suggestions because those in high places have asked me to tell you not to lean toward the left, as you give the impression of doing."

Maritain then wrote to Journet: "On the part of Rome, I sense there are enormous misunderstandings. It is through the church that they are trying to strike me. (Why have I always felt apprehensive about Cardinal Pacelli, about whose "sanctity" many persons bragged on their return from Rome.) [It was Pacelli, the future Pius XII, who in person told Maritain to limit himself strictly to speculative philosophy.] It is not I alone who will be the target of their attack, it is all sorts of germinations of life and of good movements among a great number of souls, it is all the good that I was hoping for which will be ruined. It goes without saying, I know very well, that we must be ready to be ground down, and that this is undoubtedly the means by which in mysterious ways things advance. What bothers me is how these things are carried out. If this is the way things have to be done, then let them be done well. Think about this my very dear friend and tell me what to do. During the summer we will see what reactions my book will produce. If it is put on the Index, what should I do?...Naturally there is the duty of submission to the church. But we have other duties, toward the truth and toward souls, that must be reconciled with that submission" (II, 579).



Back in 1935, Maritain had written to Journet: "But there is...the question of scandals that must be brought to light. Are we guilty of *abandoning the sheep* if we refrain from mouthing the same prejudices and the same ready-made erroneous opinions they have become accustomed to? Or rather isn't it just not howling with the wolves? In other words, to what degree is it required of apostles of the truth to go easy on error concerning questions that are infra-dogmatic? Didn't Saint Thomas scandalize the ancient scholastics with his doctrine on the unicity of substantial form? Was he supposed to remain silent on this question in order not to put at risk his grand theological synthesis?" (II, 549).

Both Journet and Maritain came to realize that the friendship of Garrigou-Lagrange was not as true and as deep as

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Rondel of Charles D'Orleans, #1

The season now has cast away its cloak,
The clothes it wore of wind and rain and cold.
The season sports the stitches, bright and bold,
Of sunshine on a form that just awoke.

There is no beast in field or bird in oak
That has not seen or sung, that has not told:
The season now has cast away its cloak.
The clothes it wore of wind and rain and cold

Are gone, and river, fountain, stream, and brook
Run on in finery the sun has rolled
With silver spangles or with coins of gold.
The waters all wear vestments sun-bespoke.
The season now has cast away its cloak.

Len Krisak

they believed. In 1942, Journet wrote to Maritain: "I have heard nothing from P. Garrigou-Lagrange, we no longer write to one another. But I believe he continues to defend us in his own fashion which is not always the best" (II, 785). Today Garrigou-Lagrange's secret collusion with and even encouragement of Maritain's enemies in Argentina is no secret.

If Maritain publicly questioned the church's position on human sexuality, there was grave danger that the great work of his life, the complete renewal of Christian philosophy, for which he needed the church's approval, would be compromised. He could not risk the chance that *Integral Humanism* would be placed on the Index, or even being refused a *nihil obstat*. He gave priority to going public on the great problems of political philosophy and social justice.

Journet was caught in the same dilemma. He was in trouble with his bishop, Monseigneur Besson, because of his position on the Spanish Civil War. He wrote to Maritain: "The only chance I have to do intellectual work is to remain in the seminary. If I go back to Geneva, it will be to parish work, which I love also, but any serious and extended study would be impossible...I don't want to do anything that might endanger my position here—it is already endangered as you know by a kind of wish I suspect on the part of monsignor to send me back to Geneva, either because he needs a priest there who etc., or because with my modern tastes he must think I am an *enfant terrible* in this holy house of the seminary...So I'm ready to "run risks." But [as was quoted above] I don't want to put myself at risk on any question at all. There are certain problems where I think that boldness would actually amount to imprudence (for example, the very strict positions of the church on continence in marriage)" (II, 322).

Journet, like Maritain, had to choose his priorities in order not to compromise his profound and sustained writings on the theology of the church. For each of them going public on birth control was not worth compromising the work of a lifetime.

While he was ambassador of France to the Vatican after World War II, Maritain wrote to Journet that "during the Occupation intelligent people were scandalized because they heard too many Thomists chanting the litanies of Maréchal Pétain and heard a great theologian whom we know [Garrigou-Lagrange] actually declare in Rome that any priest who gave absolution to a supporter of de Gaulle was living in a permanent state of mortal sin" (III, 812).

What would Maritain think today of the church's attempts to block international efforts to disseminate information on and methods of birth control among the people of the third world? No one knows yet how he reacted to the silencing of John Courtney Murray on questions of religious freedom. Or how would he have reacted to the dismissal of Charles Curran from The Catholic University of America, precisely for his views on contraception, or to the wholesale repression of liberation theology? It would be helpful today to have his reactions to the promulgation of *Ex corde ecclesiae* with its promise of more of the same at Catholic universities, particularly in their theology faculties. Maritain saw firsthand in France the effect on Catholic intellectuals, particularly young Thomists, of such clerical interference in politics. In 1946 when he found out that in support of the attacks on him from South America, Garrigou-Lagrange had implied that Maritain might be guilty of doctrinal "deviations," he wrote to his former mentor: "If there is at the present moment a crisis of Thomism in France, if many young minds seek their nourishment in new theologies, you can be sure that one of the causes of this disaffection is the fact that since the quarrels of the *Ralliment*...we have seen defenders of sacred doctrine let themselves be taken in completely by outrageous illusions in the domain of national politics. Not everyone makes the distinction between substance and accident" [The Yves Simon Papers].

We know what Maritain thought of the inflation of infallibility and its extension to "infra-dogmatic" questions, whether of politics or human sexuality. Couldn't we say again what Maritain said in a letter quoted above (III, 985) that the church's position on birth control and human sexuality is "another of those tragic examples where the church defends a truth by blockading it with ways of thinking that simple human experience has left way behind (*à l'aveuglette*)," which may also be translated "like a mule wearing blinders to avoid seeing what is really going on around it"? His conscientious dissent from church teaching on birth control and his decision not to publicly challenge that teaching for fear of jeopardizing his groundbreaking philosophical work on democracy should give pause to those now ardently demanding strict conformity from Catholic theologians. □

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Rand Richards Cooper

PRISONERS OF LOVE

'Bridget Jones's Diary' & 'The Widow of Saint-Pierre'

I lived in Germany for several years, and it almost destroyed me for romantic comedy. I can remember sitting in a *kino*, gnashing my teeth at the scene in *Schlaflos in Seattle* where Meg Ryan and Rosie O'Donnell get teary-eyed retelling the plot of the Cary Grant movie, *An Affair to Remember*. What was wrong with Americans? Why did we have to make everything so cute, so smiley-happy-weepy?

Too much Wim Wenders will do this to you.

Back again stateside, I landed amid the late-nineties romantic comedy boom, gnashing my way through *You've Got Mail* and *Notting Hill* and *My Best Friend's Wedding*, until it seemed I might never again smile in delight at the innocence of a kiss. But now comes Bridget Jones and her diary. The movie, if you haven't heard, chronicles a year in the life of a thirty-two-year-old London publishing house underling, taking up her daily worries about her weight, her love life, her weight, her job, her weight—and the great, overarching fear of remaining eternally single and unloved. Like the novel it is based on, a bit of friendly fluff by Helen Fielding, *Bridget Jones's Diary* plays with *Pride and Prejudice*—riffing on Jane Austen's famous opening lines, and distracting Bridget with a handsome bounder, Daniel, while awkward, proud Mark Darcy (get it?)—lingers in the background. Will Bridget (Renee Zellweger) can the cad and snatch the catch instead? Guess.

Bridget Jones's Diary isn't just a romantic comedy, but one specially pitched to women ("Total chick flick," a guy in the theater lobby commented), and its mammoth appeal lies in the shrewd decision to serve up not just romance, but a detailed anatomy of "The Bad Day." Bridget endures the nightmare of hideous clothes ("Great," she says, after borrowing a dress from her mother for a party, "I was wearing a carpet.") She suffers through the world's worst hair day. The boss from hell. And on and on. Panic and mortification lurk in every social situation. What do you say at a high-powered publishing party when suddenly you find yourself in conversation with Salman Rushdie? Or when you're the only one to show up to a costume party unaware that the "vicars and tarts" theme has been—oops!—canceled? Director Sharon Maguire brings a comic exaggeration to a young(ish) woman's trials, and to her triumphs too: like telling the jerk you work for exactly what you think of him, then walking off the job; or finally finding a man who looks you in the eyes and says, "I like you—just as you are." That may not be Cary Grant dialogue, but it sure sends a sigh through the audience.

While *Bridget Jones's Diary*—the novel—bogged down in its heroine's appalling self-absorption, the movie makes Bridget likable, indeed lovable (that's the point, after all), and does so through the very shamelessness of its romantic gambits. It's playful about what it's doing to us, the soundtrack most of all: Bridget preparing for a big date, shaving her legs to *Mission Impossible*-esque music, or sitting at home alone, drowning her sorrows in red wine and singing along in weepy defiance to Eric Carmen's gooey seventies pop tune, "All by Myself." It might be scary to see how fully pop culture shapes Bridget's dilemmas, moods, and sense of self (she panics while watching Glenn Close's psychotic-because-unmarried performance in *Fatal Attraction*)—scary, if it weren't so funny.

Bridget Jones's Diary won't rock your world, but it might shake it a little, with laughter. There are hilarious scenes, one involving a public-speaking meltdown (Bridget's), another with her two suitors

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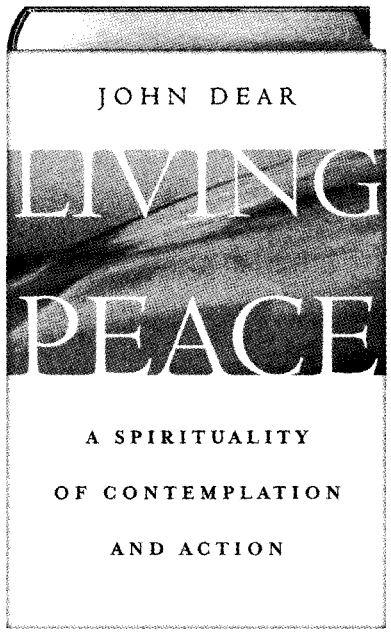

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Fatal attraction

duking it out, showcasing the hilarious spectacle of Oxbridge street-brawling. Hugh Grant is terrific as Bridget's womanizing boss—incorrigibly witty, casually cynical, his cadaverous good looks hinting at a Dorian Gray-like corruption within. As for Zellweger, doing an English accent (almost Streep-like in its quality, by the way) frees her up, letting her be louder than usual, and less controlled. Bridget drinks too much, and smokes too much, and eats too much; and Zellweger (who gained twenty-five pounds to do the role, which amounts to moral courage for an actress in Hollywood these days) looks the part, doughy and flushed and sloppy. Best of all, she conveys how deeply in the emotion of the moment Bridget is—way up when something goes well, crashing when it doesn't, winning our tender affection. Here's a woman who, while visiting her parents, buttons up flannel PJs and announces, "I'm going to Bedfordshire." Meg Ryan says that line, and I wince. Renee Zellweger says it, and I'm all hers. Go figure.

The Widow of Saint-Pierre is the latest from French director Patrice Leconte, a gloomy, muted piece of work that looks like penance for his having committed the spry comedy of last year's *The Girl on the Bridge*. The film is set in 1850, in a remote French territory off the coast of Newfoundland, where two fishermen take part in a drunken and pointless tavern killing that results in a death sentence for one of them, Neel Auguste (Emir Kusturica). There's no guillotine in the settlement, however; one has to be sent for from Paris. Meanwhile, the condemned man's rehabilitation is championed by a do-gooding blue-blood couple—the captain of the regiment, Jean (Daniel Auteuil), and his wife Pauline, known as Madame La (Juliette Binoche). Madame La drafts Neel to help build a greenhouse garden; the effort expands to fixing people's houses, and bit by bit Neel becomes a popular figure in the town, his impending execution pitting the populace, led by the eccentric Madame La, against a governor and magistrates bent on "justice."

The movie raises the moral problem of executing a man who has reformed himself, and the populist uprising ("No guillotine on Saint-Pierre!") lends a political gloss. But Leconte's main interest lies in the curious triangle involving prisoner, benefactress, and husband. "She is governed by her passions," the captain says, defending his wife's behavior. Madame La also seems inflamed sexually by Neel, and her arousal in turn erotically charges her relations with her husband, making the two of them the object of envious tea-parlor gossip. ("We can't all have a convict around to arouse our men's flagging interest," one woman complains.)

Widow's far-north setting is forbiddingly barren, all fog and ice and stone buildings, and the film has a muted, grayed-out look, like a barely colorized photograph—the flowers Madame La and Neel cultivate, and the passions they engender, bringing heat and color to a wintry world. These frail flowers are doomed to die. *Widow* has the plotting of tragedy, and the look, too (there's a gorgeous, Düreresque image of Neel Auguste's hands sticking out between the bars of his cell, with Binoche kissing them). But characters' motives are left way too obscure. The captain and Madame La wonder why Neel doesn't crave his freedom. The governor and his cronies wonder why the captain can't, or won't, rein in his wife. The gossips at the café wonder who's sleeping with whom. Fate-sealing decisions are taken, and no one—we least of all—understands why. *The Widow of Saint-Pierre* is based on nineteenth-century court documents, and that's exactly how it feels, a bare-bones chronicle Leconte tries to deepen with slow, somber shots of Madame La staring out the window looking pensive, or the Captain, holding a flower, closing his eyes and inhaling with an aesthete's brooding thrill. Auteuil and Binoche give it their best, but their parts are badly underwritten; there's so little to connect the points of Madame La's impulsive actions that she comes off as bizarre, her passion and compassion swirling together in a weird, panting charity.

There are political-historical ironies here: aristocratic *noblesse oblige* posed against the bloodless cynicism of the magistrates, with their Second Republic anxiety over working-class radicalism; or the death sentence hanging over the republic itself, which within a year will be crushed and replaced by Louis Napoleon's Second Empire. But supplying these elements doesn't solve Leconte's problem. I kept thinking of Daniel Vigne's wonderful 1982 film, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, which managed to give a skeletal courtroom chronicle the flesh of human drama, while providing a tantalizing glimpse into the mindset of an historical era. *The Widow of Saint-Pierre* doesn't live up to its own visual power; there's so little emotional impact that the destinies plotted out become mere lines of force, tragedy's contours without its content.

A closing note: Though the two movies under review couldn't be more dissimilar, Leconte's film contains the following line: "I love you for what you are—I wouldn't change a thing." *Widow* portrays a time when no man would say this unless, and until, he was being led to the firing squad. Which, depending how you see things, is either a tragedy or comedy all its own. □

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Benjamin Ivry

ANON WAS A WOMAN

Enchanting chanting

Praised by some critics as the "hottest vocal quartet" since the Beatles, the singing group Anonymous 4 has sold more than 1 million CDs of meditative medieval music on Harmonia Mundi. In the wake of best-selling Gregorian chant CDs that soothe today's overstressed audiences, Anonymous 4, in permanent residence at Manhattan's Corpus Christi Church, tour worldwide. Their sound is virginally pure yet sexy, girlish and yet offering maternal comfort. Unlike male singers of Gregorian, who often sound sober and somber, the singers of Anonymous 4 are always upbeat and determined, no doubt in part because of their individual skills and backgrounds. Marsha Genesky and Susan Hellauer have degrees in folklore and early music, respectively, while contralto Susan Hellauer's studies in musicology give the group its scholarly seriousness. Irish singer Jacqueline Horner recently replaced founding member (and trained flautist) Ruth Cunningham, who left the group to pursue a career in the use of music in healing. Indeed, the guest book on the group's Web site (www.anonymous4.com) features many accounts of the health-related benefits of the group's music.

Despite the music's beneficent powers, the group itself retains a lightness of touch that is welcome. Their name is a joke, borrowed from the name "Anonymous IV," which music professors use for an unknown thirteenth-century author of a music treatise. To purists, who complain that monastic music was written for male voices, Hellauer demurs: "While women were not allowed to sing in the cathedral, and therefore would not have been 'professional' soloists of sacred music, within the confines of their convents they would have sung chant, just as men did in their monasteries. Certainly, the virtuoso chant of the twelfth-century reformer and mystic Hildegard of Bingen would have been sung by the nuns in her charge. Both medieval chant and polyphonic manuscripts have survived in convents; from this we can infer that women sang polyphony as well." Hellauer emphasizes that the group's fans—some proudly call themselves "4-Heads"—may be "drawn to an ancient tradition of spirituality, which is the source of much of the music we sing. Many people these days seem to be seeking a connection to the world of the spirit, perhaps as a reaction to our overwhelmingly technological world."

Anonymous 4 concerts are usually based on a unified theme. They may have to do with a saint or a feast day, with a liturgical service or a literary idea. Although the group does not stress the liturgical significance of the music, preferring to attract a wide audience drawn to spiritual melodies, clearly the packaging and presentation of the works are inextricably linked with the greatest cultural accomplishments of the medieval church. And monastic-style discipline is needed to prepare the programs. According to Hellauer, "the fragmentary and scattered state of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century English polyphonic sources makes the creation of an edition a daunting task. There exists not even one substantial intact manuscript from which to work. Instead, there are hundreds of strips, scraps, paste-downs, and flyleaves to be found, matched, deciphered, and transcribed. Reconstructions, ranging from a few notes to an entire voice part, are often necessary." Despite these labors, the group's performances radiate a reassuringly enjoyable aura of confidence and authority.

Their records are equally spirited, such as *Legends of Saint Nicholas*, a Christmas album that is not just more of the same old ho-ho-ho: in these energetic songs, Santa Claus does not just reward good children, he beats evildoers with a stick! Anonymous 4's latest disc, *1000: A Mass for the End of Time*, is a view of how, a millennium ago, people were anxious about apocalypse, but were able to cope in part thanks to angelic-sounding music. Another recording, *11,000 Virgins: Chants for the Feast of Saint Ursula*, highlights the music of Hildegard of Bingen about the legendary fourth-century martyr and her companions.

Anonymous 4 first sang together fifteen years ago, and their debut disk *An English Ladymass* (1993) was the first recording of chant to rise to the *Billboard* classical bestsellers chart, where it reigned for nearly two years. Then came two more successes: a Christmas disk *On Yoolis Night*, and *Love's Illusion*, music of chivalry from medieval France. Ready to expand its horizons, the group has participated in modern composer Richard Einhorn's *Voices of Light*, an oratorio written to accompany the 1928 silent film, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, directed by Carl Theodor Dreyer. It is available on CD from Sony, as well as on video and DVD. Recently Anonymous 4 collaborated with British composer John Tavener on his *The Bridegroom*, based on the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. Devotees of choral music are delighted with a new publication of four selections from the group's *On Yoolis Night*, just released by earthsongs (www.earthsongsmus.com). Now avid 4-Heads can remain anonymous at home or at concerts. □

Benjamin Ivry *writes often on music for* Commonweal.

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Faith, sex & poetry

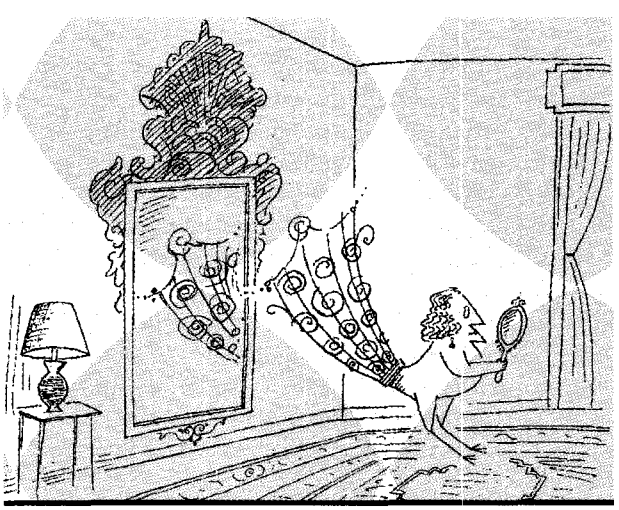
The Virgin of Bennington
Kathleen Norris
Riverhead, $24.95, 272 pp.

Valerie Sayers

Kathleen Norris opens her new memoir with an epigraph from Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, and the youthful adventures of the first few chapters suggest that this book may be Augustinian in content, at least when it comes to the sinning. Though Norris is indeed a virgin most of the time she is a student at Bennington College in the 1960s, she soon enough has an affair with a woman and another with a married male professor. Shortly after her post-graduation arrival in New York City, her adventures begin in earnest. At one point she takes to sleeping with a dancer who is beginning to doubt his homosexuality. "I thought it over," Norris writes, "and decided it was the least a friend could do."

That deadpan line is typical of Norris's commentary on her own role in the sexual revolution. But sex, despite the come-on of the title and the first few chapters, is not this book's major theme. As in her previous autobiographical works, *Dakota* and *The Cloister Walk*, Norris employs a hybrid form: Here it's part popular history of the 1970s poetry scene in New York, part meditation on a writer's coming of age, and large part biography of the late Elizabeth Kray, director of the Academy of American Poets (AAP) at the time Norris worked there. The narrative moves forward chronologically, then loops back on itself, sometimes creating a subtle echoing effect, occasionally leaving a reader with a sense of déjà vu. That effect may be heightened for those who have read Norris's other nonfiction.

Her method in all three memoirs, and in *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith*, is quirky and original. She combines confessional prose with cultural commentary, narrative with argument, plain declarative sentences with lovely lyrical passages. Her appreciation for the power of language moves her to quote widely, from Scripture to poetry to conversation. Norris is, famously, a poet who was raised in a Protestant family but left religious practice behind when she left home. After Bennington, she went to work for the AAP and began to publish her own work. At twenty-six, she abandoned New York City for a family home in South Dakota, and began a spiritual search that led her to join a local Presbyterian church and later to become a Benedictine oblate, experiences that she has explored at length in her previous books.



One of the impulses of *The Virgin of Bennington* seems to be to complete her *oeuvre* of spiritual questing by filling in the secular blanks. This involves a frank discussion of her initiations into the sexual and pharmacological experiments of the early seventies. Let me admit straight off to some old-fashioned hesitancy about the name-dropping in the accounts of her sexual adventures, which are otherwise handled with wit, tenderness, and a healthy dose of self-forgiveness when forgiveness is called for. While most of the lovers are anonymous, a couple of famous ones are cited, which seems a little...star-conscious, perhaps. Naming names is as problematic in sex as it is in politics: you can't do it without betraying a confidence or calling your own self-promotional instincts into question.

Besides, there's plenty of opportunity for joyful name-dropping in Norris's descriptions of the New York readings and club scenes. Her picture of the time is wonderfully economical: a reader gets in-focus snapshots of Max's Kansas City, the 92nd Street Y, and a party where all the women are wearing hot pants and some of the men are not behaving well. My favorite glimpses involve famous people in awe of other famous people: Patti Smith describes how she sat on the curb sobbing after Bob Dylan came into the bookstore where she worked; James Tate phones the AAP office to report that he's sitting next to Little Richard at the airport. Norris is interviewed to be the roommate of the Andy Warhol star Ultra Violet, who declines to offer the room. But Gerard Malanga, iconic downtown figure—poet, photographer, and co-founder of *Interview* magazine—becomes a friend for life.

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The most loving portrait, and the bulk of the book, belong to Betty Kray, Norris's mentor and supporter extraordinaire of poetry and poets. Though *The Virgin of Bennington* uses Norris's own experiences as the angle through which we come to know her friend, it is Kray who becomes the anchor and the conscience of the book. When Norris first meets her, she's a woman in her fifties; after a stint at the 92nd Street Y, she has come to the AAP with a mission to revitalize poetry in the United States. Her inventive schemes—to put poets in the schools, to pair translators and poets at readings of international work, to ask established writers to introduce emerging poets—have shaped a generation's view of how poetry might move into this country's public sphere. Some of the most bracing passages in the book come from Kray's own writing, especially her correspondence, which is filled with energy and passion. To Norris she writes: "To describe simple, pure, intense experience requires a drowning of self in the oblivion of language." While Norris is not always successful in drowning herself—it's hard to imagine a memoir that completely submerges its author—she comes closest in her portrait of Kray. Her account of her old friend's final days is simple, pure, and intense, as per instructions.

As in much of Norris's nonlinear nonfiction, parts of this book seem to have been imagined separately and later spliced together. With a little editing, and of course a change of title, *The Virgin of Bennington* could easily be a straightforward memoir about Elizabeth Kray rather than another memoir about Kathleen Norris. Actually, that seems to be the direction in which Norris is heading. If the beginning of this book is an emotional striptease, by story's end it is a loving testament to a wise old friend. At this point in her literary career, Norris may have offered us enough of her own story. She seems ready to move on to other lives, other narratives. □

Valerie Sayers, *professor of English at the University of Notre Dame, is the author of five novels.*

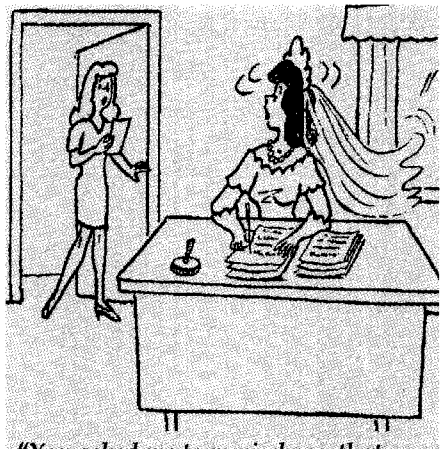
TILL DEATH DO US PART?

Public Vows
A History of Marriage and the Nation
Nancy Cott
Harvard University Press, $27.95, 288 pp.

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead

Ask Americans today to define marriage, and they are likely to describe it as a private intimate relationship between two soulmates. To be sure, most people also know that couples have to go to city hall for a license, make promises before a representative of the state, and sign a "piece of paper," but few can explain why we go through these public gestures.

This book tells us why. According to historian Nancy Cott, marriage is, and has been, inextricably bound to and shaped by the state. The state sets the rules for entering and exiting marriage, decides who can and cannot marry legally, defines the privileges and obligations of marriage, and interprets marriage law. "The laws of marriage," she writes, "must play a large part in forming 'the people.'" Thus, as Cott sees it, if Americans want to understand who we are as a people, we have to understand who we are as a marrying people.



"You asked me to remind you that you have an appointment at 3 o'clock."

Cott traces the state's persistent and largely successful efforts to establish a monolithic marriage regime based on western Christian marriage tradition and English common law. In many respects, she notes, this marriage regime mirrored the political regime. Both emphasized the contractual basis of a union, mutual consent, and the right to sever the union when bonds of affection grow cold. However, over time, the state exploited the close correspondence between marriage and politics to strengthen the power and authority of men over women and to impose a single model of marriage upon "nonconforming" minorities. Cott tells a story of the rise and fall of this monolithic model of Christian marriage. In Cott's view of marriage, the early national period was a Jeffersonian golden age. The population was small, governmental presence weak, and the public oversight of marriage was principally a concern of the local community. Friends, family, and neighbors supported the institution of lifelong monogamous marriage but also took a permissive view of common-law marriages, separation, self-divorce, and unions between whites and Indians. With access to local knowledge about individual circumstances, the community could afford to be generous to nonconforming members without compromising its basic belief in marriage. The period after the Civil War, however, ushered in a darker age. As new immigrants, utopian communitarians, and religious sects challenged the reigning model of marriage with such practices as polygamy, free love, and arranged marriages, the state responded with what Cott describes as a legally aggressive and "morally belligerent" effort to mobilize the resources of the state on behalf of a threatened standard. It outlawed polygamy, banned interracial marriage, criminalized the mailing of contraceptive information,

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and required legal marriage for Native Americans.

Similarly, the state imposed a model of male-headed marriage and nuclear family life on emancipated slaves. During Reconstruction, according to Cott, the marital orthodoxy and morality of ex-slaves became a near obsession with the Freedmen's Bureau, as it tried to link male headship in marriage with the new rights of citizenship for African American men. With the twentieth century, and the political emancipation of women, this link weakened, but a new one was forged. In Cott's words, "marital unity was rewritten economically in the provider/dependent model, a pairing in which the husband carried more weight."

But in the twentieth century, and particularly after the mid-1960s, the establishment model of marriage began to fall apart. With the creation of a new legal framework permitting easy divorce, marriage-like benefits for cohabiting couples, and the provisions for paternity identification, child custody, and support outside of marriage, the state engaged in the dismantling of the single standard of traditional marriage. One consequence was the increasing identification of marriage with a narrow contractualism. Americans began to see marriage as a private consensual arrangement, designed to fulfill the emotional and sexual needs of two consenting adults, and as nobody's business but the two people involved.

Up to the last chapter of her book, Cott's story is coherent and consistent, mainly because it follows a very familiar narrative line. To oversimplify only a bit, her marriage story pits a conforming male Christian majority against nonconforming "marginalized" groups, including Native Americans, women, slaves, new immigrants, and free thinkers. With the disestablishment of marriage, the nonconforming minorities win out. (Oddly, there is barely a mention of children in the entire book, perhaps because this event could not be considered a victory for dependent children.) But at this point, Cott's logic gets muddled. She stops to wonder: Given the successful disestablishment of marriage, the much wider array of marriage-like alternatives, and the greater public tolerance for private choices in private life, why do people still want to enter into legal, lifelong monogamous marriages? More simply, if people entered into this institution simply because the state imposed it on them, and now the state no longer does so, why do a lot of people still prefer it? Why, especially, do gay people petition the state for the right to enter into this bedraggled institution?

It's to her credit that Cott raises these questions. Unfortunately, she is unable to answer them. She makes only a halfhearted effort to do so, and this effort borders on incoherence. Cott never considers the possibility that the contemporary model of monogamous lifelong marriage, though perhaps ever in need of reform and renewal, seems to many women superior to some of the "nonconforming" models, such as arranged marriage, bigamy, and polygamy. □

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead *is the author of* The Divorce Culture *(Knopf).*

Church Unity
& the Papal Office
An Ecumenical Dialogue on John Paul II's Encyclical Ut Unum Sint
Edited by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson

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RIGHT THING, WRONG REASON

Cold War Civil Rights
Race and the Image of American Democracy
By Mary L. Dudziak
Princeton University Press, $29.95, 352 pp.

John Summers

The soil of racial justice was rich with promise in the decades after World War II. In a relatively short period, perennial contradictions in American public policy gave way to a new, progressive thesis among federal officials. In 1948, Harry Truman desegregated the American military. Six years later, the Supreme Court overturned public school segregation, a landmark ruling followed in the 1960s by key congressional action on voting rights.

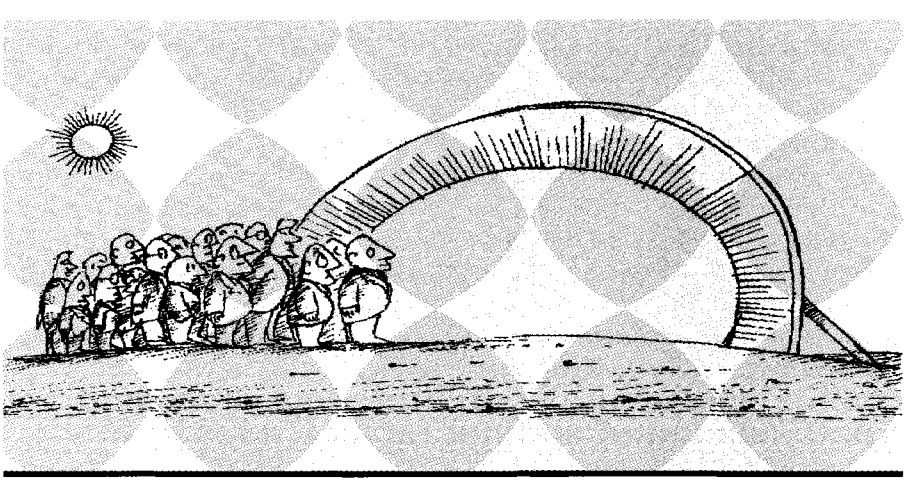
What explains the "Second Reconstruction," as historians call this epoch of race-based reform? No such rich and interesting question can bend to a single explanation, and scholars have looked over the problem from many angles.

Now comes Mary L. Dudziak to focus us on cold-war diplomacy, which she insists proved decisive for the advance of civil-rights reform. Her argument, expressed in clear, workmanlike prose, is based largely on the records of the Department of State. These, we are told, disclose several interesting propositions.

First, the cold war had barely begun when Soviet and American officials each realized a cosmopolitan understanding of international public opinion. All domestic political news could potentially become foreign news. Second, insofar as the cold war would in fact become a war of ideas, the United States was vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy, not least because it had recently concluded a war now understood as a blow to fascist racialism. America claimed for its institutions superior legitimacy and for its people a clear moral preeminence. Yet it could not summon the political will to end the everyday brutality of racial strife.

Dudziak presents the case of India, where Ambassador Chester Bowles reported in 1951 that treatment of American blacks had become "the number one question" put to foreign policy. That the topic commanded such attention owed in part to the general success of Soviet propaganda, inside and outside the United States, and in part to the domestic thunder from below. Before a politically volatile world, the civil-rights movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s made Southern blacks seem like inhabitants of an internal colony.

According to Dudziak's examination of the political thought of federal poli-



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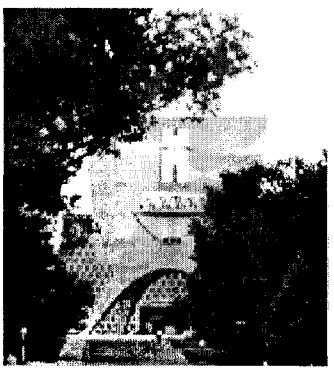

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cymakers, the tonic for this condition was not only passing meaningful civil-rights reform, but also controlling the "narrative" by which the domestic struggle for reform unfolded in the media. Liberal policymakers repeatedly voiced concern that racism undermined the "national interest." Reaching its apotheosis in the early 1960s, when the popular press of former African colonies expressed concern about the fate of American blacks, this "cold-war argument" informed reaction to every major moment in the civil-rights era.

Yet if "cold-war discourse" accommodated itself to the moral force of civil rights, then civil rights had to accommodate itself to the cramped ideological premises of the cold war. Liberal anticommunism, in the thrall of a bifurcated, nationalistic worldview, could endorse only limited and formal progress.

The nation's world/historical commitments persuaded its officials to view "American race relations through the lens of a black/white paradigm," and to discourage grassroots efforts to create an international anticolonial movement. Reformers deemed insufficiently appreciative of domestic racial progress—men and women such as W.E.B. DuBois, Paul Robeson, and Josephine Baker—found their passports confiscated when they did not suffer harassment by American embassies. In other words, racial struggle within the nation constituted a newly acceptable subject for discussion in the international arena, so long as the "narrative" was rendered in a manner that ultimately smiled favorably upon the image of the nation. Try to link class and race as complementary categories of oppression, and you would court the kind of danger that comes with allegations of treason. The partial and formal character of federal action on civil rights owed to these political stipulations; and Dudziak is most illuminating when she treats the problem of rights from that angle.

Thus does *Cold War Civil Rights* propose one of those delicious Tocquevillian ironies—"the cold war was simultaneously an agent of repression and an agent of change." In pursuit of this irony, Dudziak presents a compelling analysis of what happened and why it happened. Nonetheless, her book, like many academic monographs, seems rather timid before its findings. Why has modern American state power proved so vulnerable to "the mirror of international criticism"? And what do the particular images reflected in it reveal about the character of the state itself?

Had Dudziak invited theories of empire to guide her research, the charm of her conclusions would diminish. But their explanatory power would gain accordingly. Among the many justifications for modern empire, the correspondence between overseas aggression, domestic unification, and national glory had long recommended itself to the imperial mind. Conquest in Algeria, insisted Tocqueville and other liberals in the 1840s, would dissolve France's internal political predicaments, consolidate its national identity, and "raise on the coast of Africa a great monument to the glory of our country." Domestic unification—always a difficult project for liberal governments—and national aggression would become mutually conditioning phenomena of political psychology.

The United States had to wait until Europe descended into ruins before assuming its turn at world dominance. What appeared to nineteenth-century liberals as "national glory" became to twentieth-century American liberals the "image of democracy." And what once fell to "empire" now fell, in a characteristically elastic American euphemism, to "national security." In this way, the puzzle of how (limited) moral progress on race could court sympathy from within an otherwise brutalizing "cold-war discourse" becomes at once more pedestrian and more important than Dudziak allows. During the struggle for civil rights, liberal policymakers developed a new version of the doctrine Tocqueville had proposed more than a hundred years before. In redressing domestic injustice, the new version increasingly would rely on international "credibility" rather than domestic moral consensus.

To permit this broader foundation for civil-rights reform to recede from view, as Dudziak does, is to neglect a lesson that continues to haunt American reformers. The quest for justice can never win the true sanction of American ideals if it rests on illegitimate foundations. □

John Summers, *a Ph.D. candidate in American history at the University of Rochester, teaches in the social studies program at Harvard University.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 4)

walked out. What were Israel's next steps supposed to be?

Father Burrell claims that the *intifada* is "directed as much against the Palestinians' own leadership as releasing pent-up frustration against" the Israelis. But stones, bullets, and mortars have been aimed at Israelis. Palestinian suicide bombers have not gone to Arafat's headquarters.

Burrell also suggests that Israel has completely ignored the question of Palestinian refugees. On the contrary,

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Barak's proposal—the one to which Arafat had no response—included return of some refugees and compensation for others.

And as for 1967, it was not only Yeshayahu Leibowitz who advocated returning the occupied territories (which had previously been occupied by Jordan). The Israeli government offered to trade land for peace, an offer that was adamantly refused, with profound consequences for the future.

The two stories are indeed complex. Israel began to acknowledge the price Palestinians have paid for the founding of the Jewish State. It has been met with continued hatred, vitriol, and delegitimation of Jews and Judaism by Arab leaders.

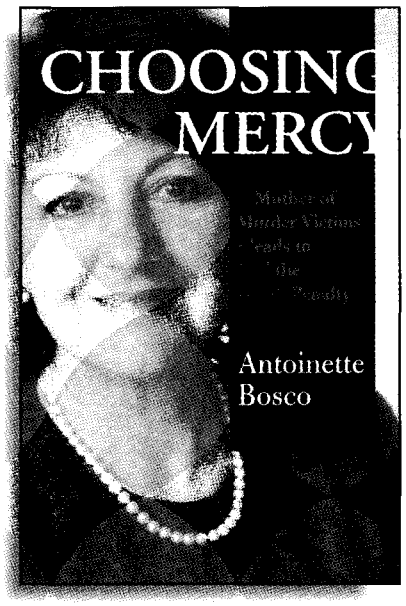
(RABBI) LAURENCE EDWARDS
New York, N.Y.

The writer is associate national director of the American Jewish Committee.

The author replies:

I don't know how I would respond to the current situation if I were a Jew, but it would probably be much as Rabbi Edwards has, for it is natural to put our own people in the best light. It took most Americans a long time to recognize that our way of waging war in Southeast Asia could no longer be justified. We can debate endlessly what one group did or did not do. I am encouraging people to look at what had been happening "on the ground" while the "peace process" went on elsewhere, and what Israel has done must be called occupation. That occupation and the way it is being carried out, as well as those in Israeli society who represent its vanguard, can hardly reflect well on Judaism itself. We must then turn to look to Palestinian and Israeli people, and find ways to bring them together, rather than allow ourselves to be distracted by the "continued hatred, vitriol, and delegitimation of Jews and Judaism by Arab leaders," for these leaders care little about either people. Neither people's leadership has served them well; let us admit that and seek ways to bring them together, beginning where we live.

DAVID BURRELL, C.S.C.



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Mistaken mandates

Jean Porter's article "Misplaced Nostalgia" (April 20) ends on a more hopeful note than is warranted. *Ex corde ecclesiae* itself and the manner in which it has been generated are inconsistent with the notion that we can achieve an "institutional integrity and flexibility" similar to the medieval university. The article did not argue, nor would I, that the medieval university is the standard to adopt. The article gently points out that even this standard is not met.

A generation from now there will be more regret about *Ex corde* than there is today. Things rarely are as bad, or as good, as we think they might be. But this whole approach has me deeply concerned.

My ability to influence *Ex corde* is limited to recommendations and comments I make about colleges and universities as well as with financial

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contributions. In each instance I'll "vote with my feet."

EDWARD DIRKSWAGER
Saint Paul, Minn.

Needed mandates

Jean Porter's "Misplaced Nostalgia" reminds us that the issues of accountability and episcopal oversight of universities have a long history. I fear, however, that she makes a couple of errors which may undermine some of her conclusions. First, what many theologians in late thirteenth-century universities objected to about the "philosophers" on the arts faculties was not that they used philosophical methods, but that they seemed to use them to draw conclusions on matters essential to the faith apart from the canons of theological proof. Whether they were right to do so is another matter, but it does need to be pointed out that most of the greatest and most original medieval philosophers (Aquinas, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, Ockham) were, in fact, by profession theologians.

Second, while it's quite true that medieval academics jealously defended their institutions from juridical oversight by local bishops, they were able to do this and remain faithful to the magisterium precisely because most of them were committed to the truth of the fundamental doctrines of the faith. However wide-ranging their debates, they also, as Porter admits, were not at all shy about defending the purity of these basic principles against wayward colleagues (a zeal which sometimes even overflowed into groundless accusations). Members of theology faculties, it seems, were especially inclined to carry out this duty.

Are today's academics prepared to do this sort of thing (I mean, in due measure, and with charity)? That would be the ideal solution, and would obviate the need for the *mandatum*, but, frankly, I doubt it will happen. The dominant contemporary academic ideology (and etiquette) frowns upon it, to say the least. Given this, I believe that Porter's stated desire to have a flexible criterion of faithfulness to the church suited to our times militates for the *mandatum*, not against it.

PAUL J. RADZILOWSKI
Orchard Lake, Mich.

The author replies:

It is true that the thirteenth-century theologians who objected to the freedom of the philosophers did so because they feared that the philosophers were not sufficiently orthodox. But this worry cannot be separated so neatly from a concern about philosophy per se. The philosophers were willing to submit their views to the final judgment of the church, but they also argued that in order to carry out philosophical inquiry with integrity, they needed the freedom to examine heterodox claims, and even to defend them provisionally, as a way of drawing out the implications of an argument. And the theologians who objected most strenuously to their methods of proceeding did object to the application of philosophical methods to theological questions, which they believed were best handled through traditional methods of scriptural exegesis and commentaries on authoritative texts. The theologians whom Paul Radzilowski mentions were more open to philosophy, in part because most of them were trained in philosophy, as theologians in the early part of the thirteenth century often were not.

If we were to go back to the medieval model, as Radzilowski suggests, theologians would be charged with the duty of overseeing the orthodoxy of their colleagues in philosophy. But any such procedure would be inimical to the principles of free inquiry which are necessary to the health of theology as a discipline, and ultimately to the well-being of the church. Radzilowski remarks that this procedure would be an ideal solution, but I have to ask, solution to what? What is the problem (actual, not theoretical) to which the mandate would be an appropriate solution? I have to say that I have never seen a satisfactory answer to this question.

JEAN PORTER

Comfort the afflicted

From personal experience, I would like to expand on Sidney Callahan's excellent "Spiritual Symptoms" (April 20). My son had schizophrenia and died as a result at twenty, only months after being diagnosed. He was so severely ill that I can't say anything would have saved him, but it is certain that supposedly expert psychiatric care and the most up-to-date medications failed. Professional compassion did not comfort him, nor did it offer understanding companionship in his suffering.

Severely afflicted people such as my son need and deserve the attention of those who see in them the face of God and, therefore, love and honor them. Genuinely religious people can improve, and maybe preserve, life for those who are mentally ill.

MADELINE MARGET
Auburndale, Mass.

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MEMORIAL DAY, DORSET, VERMONT

Susanne Washburn

One day a year, in our Vermont village, you can put your hand on the heart of America. Nestled in the spring green of the Taconic range, Dorset turns out proudly every Memorial Day to salute those who went away to war from this bucolic place and never came back.

At 1 P.M. sharp, the service begins inside the marble United Church of Dorset and East Rupert, just beyond the village green. There is organ music, a color guard, and a dwindling contingent of veterans of several wars, some still trim enough to wear their old uniforms. The small church is well filled. Congregational singing intersperses prayers, a recitation of "In Flanders Fields," Lincoln's words at Gettysburg, and a speaker's address. Last year the soloist performed the haunting words and music of "Tenting Tonight," an 1860s war lament sung on both sides of the enemy line. The martial beat of "Onward, Christian Soldiers" (a hymn I stopped singing decades ago) concludes the service.

When the color guard retires, it leads a parade from the church, past the oval green, onto Route 30 where a state trooper stops traffic for the duration. Behind the color guard comes a flag-festooned convertible carrying three elderly veterans. The Burr and Burton Academy band, crisp in summer whites accented with mountain green, contributes brass, drums, and horns. Dorset's red-and-white LaFrance pumper is a high-profile participant. Some children have created a float; others ride trikes, flying clusters of small flags. Townspeople and guests in sportswear fall in behind.

The parade makes the short trek to Maple Hill Cemetery, up a slight incline and down into a hollow to gather near the war monument for the invocation. The band plays, then a wreath is laid. In response to shouted commands, four veterans fire the traditional three rifle volleys. Finally, two young buglers, standing apart, blow "Taps," the second horn repeating the first's musical phrase, each echoing again from the mountain backdrop. The parade returns to the green, where the flag is retired ceremoniously after "The Star-Spangled Banner." Formalities completed, it's on to the town picnic.

This national holiday springs from the graces of women of the South who decorated graves of both Union and Confederate dead. In Dorset the tradition began soon after the Civil War. An 1898 photo at the historical society shows a large group of people, all in hats, wearing suits and full-length dresses in front of a barn broadsided with a huge American flag. Parade-goers today still relish the celebration and visitors return from afar for another draft of pure Americana. I too am drawn back every year. Along with the color, pageantry, and country charm, it is the church service that touches me most.

The diminishing veterans' group puts a great deal of effort into the memorial. Thanks to one man's research, the full list of the dead was first read a few years ago. By far the largest group belongs to the Civil War—thirty-five from a town of, then as now, about two thousand. As wars (and medicine) proceed, the death toll declines: five in World War I, seven in World War II, two in Korea, three in Vietnam. After more research, the location and cause of death were added to each name. We hear Andersonville, the notorious Civil War prison, attached to three who died there—of disease; also Savage Station, Gettysburg, Wilderness. Five members of the Grand Army of the Republic succumbed to wounds; one, sent home ill to Dorset, died a few days after the end of the war. Decades after, there were more deaths—at the Hindenburg Line, the Battle of the Bulge, Leyte, Bien Hoa—place names of history, grim in recollection.

Memories of war are both terrible and complicated, as last month's revelations surrounding Senator Bob Kerrey in Vietnam remind us. Dorset has been fortunate in its thoughtful Memorial Day speakers who do not skirt the issues. One broached the tensions between the military and war protesters over Vietnam. Another examined Bosnia as a place that seeded many wars. A former Green Beret in Vietnam recalled the full realization of his responsibility for the lives of a platoon of men—all younger than he was—as a twenty-three-year-old first lieutenant.

Locating myself philosophically somewhere inside pacifism, I have occasionally wondered what brings me back every year to this church service. Is it because, as a toddler just before World War II, I learned to sing "When the Caissons Go Rolling Along" with my father, a farrier in the horse-drawn field artillery of World War I? I muse about these internal cross-pulls.

I am here, I've decided, because we honor these veterans for the trauma—physical and emotional—that they all endured, wherever they were, whenever it was. What else can be said of the fire test of war? A human ordeal far beyond anything most of us have known. To those of Dorset (and to all the others), to those who didn't come home and those who did, we owe this bucolic town, this blessed land—and our efforts to make it worthy of their sacrifices. □

Susanne Washburn, *now on the staff of* Commonweal, *is a former senior reporter for* Time.

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